



ALCHEMY EMPEROR OF THE DIVINE DAO

BOOK 01

Flying Alone

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Alchemy Emperor of the Divine Dao

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Synopsis

An ultimate warrior, the one and only Alchemy Emperor, Ling Han, had died in his quest to achieve godhood. Ten thousands years later, and he, with the “Invincible Heaven Scroll”, was reborn in the body of a young man with the same name. From then on, winds and clouds moved, as he set himself against uncountable geniuses of this new era. His path of becoming a legend has begun once more. At all eras, and underneath the heavens, I am the strongest!

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Chapter 1: Rebirth

Rain Country, Ling Clan Residence in Gray Cloud Town. The moon has passed the middle of the night sky.

Ling Han spent exactly ten seconds to confirm one fact: he truly had been reincarnated.

Spending ten seconds just to confirm a fact was extremely inconceivable to a strong person from the Heaven Tier, but at the same time, it also proved that what had happened to him was just as inconceivable.

In his previous life, he stood at the summit of martial arts and had completely unprecedented achievements in the art of alchemy. The "Three Fire Guide" that he had invented had even caused a revolution in the field of theory of alchemy, and he was respectfully titled "Alchemy Emperor".

Still, he was unsatisfied and thought of further advancement: to reach the legendary Shattering Void Tier, to shatter the void, and become immortal! As such, he visited innumerable ancient sites and finally entered Black Blood Valley, overcoming various dangerous obstacles before he discovered an ancient tower.

He was not to be disappointed, for golden words appeared on the ancient tower and revealed what was a scroll with supreme skills, named <>Indestructible Heaven Scroll<>. Training in it to the highest level would allow creation of a body that neither ages nor decays, to co-exist with the sky and the earth and to have the same lifespan as the sun and the moon!

However, despite being a warrior who has reached the Heaven Tier, Ling Han still felt that <>Indestructible Heaven Scroll<> was extremely obscure and difficult to comprehend, feeling as if he was reading a heavenly book—completely at a loss.

He forced himself to memorize this collection of supreme skills,

and was just about to investigate the ancient tower when the tower jolted slightly, exuding a pillar of heavenly light that instantly shattered his mortal body. However, the strange thing was, his spirit did not actually disperse and entered a state of semi-consciousness, which lasted for more than ten thousand years.

In these ten millennia, his spirit was immersed in analyzing the <<Indestructible Heaven Scroll>>—he couldn’t do anything else during that time anyway. Finally, he comprehended the first layer of the supreme skills described in the scroll.

To spend ten thousand years to comprehend only the first layer of a scroll containing skills despite being a warrior of the Heaven Tier, what kind of concept was that?

A warrior of the Heaven Tier only had the lifespan of less than a thousand years. Thus, in a normal situation, there would be no one in this world that could fully learn the contents of <<Indestructible Heaven Scroll>> because, before one had even started comprehending it, they would die of old age first!

Yet Ling Han, through this strange occurrence, grasped the first layer of <<Indestructible Heaven Scroll>>, and he was now suddenly reincarnated and reborn in the body of a sixteen-year-old young man that shared the same name, Ling Han.

It was extremely inconceivable!

‘No matter how it happened, I am reborn!

Although this body has only reached the second layer of Body Refining Tier, and couldn’t be any more trashy than this, I was once a warrior of the Heaven Tier, standing at the top of Martial Dao, and a grandmaster of Alchemy! If the body’s condition is poor, then I shall use medicinal pills to compensate for its shortcomings! I do not believe I will not be able to return to the top.

Moreover, I can finally train in the <<Indestructible Heaven

Scroll>>! This is a collection of supreme skills, so powerful that... it may not be from this mortal plane, but from the legendary immortal plane instead! Otherwise, how is it possible for me to spend ten thousand years and only grasp the first layer?

In this life, I will definitely be able to exceed all those who came before, and become immortal!

Additionally, what is the matter with this body? Sixteen years old, and yet the guy had only reached the second layer of Body Refining Tier? Could it be that the Martial Dao of the current time is dying?’

"Bang!"

Along with an explosion-like sound, uncountable memories flooded his mind. They belonged to the other Ling Han, and thus were the memories of the original owner of this body. Through this process, two completely different minds melded together and formed one, no longer separate from each other.

'I see.'

Ling Han nodded in his thoughts. The reason why he was only at the second layer of the Body Refining Tier was because his Spirit Base was of a too poor quality.

The prerequisite to train as a warrior was that one needed to have a Spirit Base. Only with a Spirit Base could one absorb the Spiritual Qi from heaven and earth, train one's body and transform the Spiritual Qi into their own Origin Power.

Some types of Spirit Bases absorb the Spiritual Qi quickly and some absorb it more slowly. To differentiate between them, Spirit Bases were categorized into four major grades: Heaven, Earth, Black and Yellow. Every major grade was further divided into three minor levels: High, Medium and Low. The best type was the Heaven Grade High Level, and the poorest type was the Yellow Grade Low Level.

The grade of Spirit Base was decided by its purity; the purer it was, the better. Ling Han's Spirit Base was in utter disarray, containing all five elements. In the world of martial arts, this was the worst type of Spirit Base; it could barely be considered Yellow Grade Low Level. It was the reason why he had only reached the second layer of Body Refining Tier at his age of sixteen, while others of the same age had at least reached the fourth or fifth layer of Body Refining Tier.

Ling Han in his previous life possessed a Heaven Grade Spirit Base, which was also a High Level one: the Nine Yang Fire Spirit Base. In addition to that, he had an incomparable talent in the art of alchemy and used pills to support his cultivation, spending only two hundred years to reach the Heaven Tier—something never achieved by anyone else in the past.

'Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base, this is the lowest level of a Spirit Base... no wonder my predecessor only reached the second layer of Body Refining Tier no matter how much he worked and trained. To me, this Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base is a bit of a problem, but with alchemical pills, I will need only four years to return to the top at most!'

'Yi!'

Ling Han exclaimed in his heart, and his face showed an expression of disbelief and utmost surprise. Using his extremely strong mental prowess to once again peer at the Spirit Base in his Dantian, he was stunned for a moment. Then, shock gave way to exuberant joy, showing on his face.

'This isn't the Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base! The Five Elements are actually in complete balance and form the shape of a lotus! That means... this is the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus, the best of the best, even rarer than the Nine Yang Fire Spirit Base! This is the Spirit Base hailed as the Spirit Base of the Immortal Grade!'

My predecessor had slow progress, but it was because Immortal Grade Spirit Base requires specialized skills to realize its true prowess. And... it just so happens that I have hold of skills that suit this Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus, the Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill!

One hundred years! No, I only need fifty years, and I can once again reach the Heaven Tier!'

Even with his status as a warrior of the Heaven Tier from his previous life, Ling Han couldn't control his expression, now full of joy. The Spirit Base was something one was born with; there was no way to change it at all. In his previous life, to shatter the empty void and become immortal, he had visited various ancient sites and obtained many different types of secret arts and cultivation techniques. The Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill was one of them!

In his previous life, he stood at the top of the martial world, and in this life, he would once again bask in glory and create an undying legend!

'How did my predecessor die?'

Ling Han flipped through his memories, and anger quickly appeared on his face.

His predecessor was the only son of the Ling Clan's Head, Ling Dong Xing. His mother and grandparents had all passed away very early on. The Ling Clan was a clan of martial artists; every clan member knew martial arts, and was proud of the fact. So, how did someone like Ling Dong Xing become the Clan Head? That was because he was the strongest and had reached his position through battling!

But Ling Han was regarded as trash since his childhood because of the issue with his Spirit Base, and had received much ridicule from those around him.

To give his son a bright future, Ling Dong Xing made an agreement with Hu Yang Academy—Hu Yang Academy would receive Ling Han as a disciple and put all efforts into training him in exchange for Ling Dong Xing entering Purple Light Ground Valley to find and retrieve something Hu Yang Academy had lost many years ago.

Hu Yang Academy was an academy under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Dynasty of the Rain Country, possessing uncountable resources. If they decided to put all effort into training him, even the worst kind of trash would be able to reach Element Gathering Tier.

But the people from Hu Yang Academy were not idiots. If that item was easily retrievable, then why would they have given such generous conditions?

Purple Light Ground Valley was a place fraught with danger. One wrong step could lead to death, but since it was for his son's sake, Ling Dong Xing departed seven days ago without hesitation.

The day before, people from Hu Yang Academy had come and informed the Ling Clan that, as promised, they would come to pick him up on this day. Yet at that moment, the Chief Butler of Ling Clan, Ling Zhong Kuan, had come to talk with his predecessor. He wanted him to give up this precious position to his own grandson, Ling Mu Yun.

The reason provided was that Ling Mu Yun was a genius with boundless prospects, and such an opportunity couldn't be wasted on trash.

His predecessor of course did not agree. After all, this was something his father had used his life in exchange to obtain! However, although Ling Zhong Kuan came to talk, he was actually only informing his predecessor and didn't come there to listen to the other's opinion at all.

His predecessor could no longer endure and acted, but Ling

Zhong Kuan was a warrior of the Element Gathering Tier. Just one finger was enough to overwhelm him—how could he resist?

With just one punch, his predecessor was seriously wounded, and was subsequently confined in his own room, obviously not to let him create an issue in front of the people from Hu Yang Academy. Once Ling Dong Xing returns, everything would have already been concluded.

The seriously wounded Ling Han thus died in anger.

Ling Han harrumphed. They have gone too far. His father used his life to obtain this position for him, and Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson dare to snatch it away just like that?

These extremely shameless dogs!

He couldn't accept this!

He rose up from his bed, and instantly felt ache throughout his whole body—true, he had obtained a new life, but the injuries on his body would not recover on their own.

'En? The Spirit Base has been damaged!' Ling Han's brow wrinkled. That attack from Ling Zhong Kuan had actually damaged his Spirit Base, and damage to the Spirit Base was a very troublesome issue; ordinary medical stones would be of no help.

'According to my understanding, there are seven types of pills that can heal damage to the Spirit Base, though four of them require ingredients that are so expensive that even selling the whole Ling Clan would not be enough—moreover, my Spirit Base had only received light damage, and thus does not require such high-grade pills.

As for the remaining three types, two of them require molding to form pills, and that would be too much of a burden at my current cultivation of second layer of Body Refining Tier. If that's so, then I only have one choice - Origin Heart Recover Spirit Powder, which can be created by simply mixing the required ingredients at the

correct ratio and cooking them to become a medical concoction.

I will heal my injuries first, and then go and stop Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson. Although I do not care about this position, I will definitely not allow the opportunity that my father has traded his life for to be used to benefit this shameless grandfather-grandson pair!"

He sat down with his legs crossed, and started circulating Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

This was his first time circulating this cultivation technique which might have been of the Immortal Grade, but because he has analyzed it for ten thousand years, it now was something that could be done easily.

"Weng, weng, weng!" Powerful life signs appeared suddenly inside his body; his Origin Power was greatly depleted, but his injuries were quickly healing.

Within just a few minutes, he was fully recovered.

'It is worthy of the name "Indestructible Heaven Scroll"! I have only just started training in it, and have already felt such remarkable effects. Yet this is completely different from other types of cultivation techniques; ordinary cultivation techniques make use of the Spirit Base to absorb Spiritual Qi from the sky and the earth to transform into Origin Power, and Indestructible Heaven Scroll is the exact opposite, using Origin Power to refine the body and heal injuries!

Once my training reaches the highest level, achieving immortality may not be impossible. That is why it is called Heaven Scroll! Unfortunately, the level now is not enough, otherwise I could use Indestructible Heaven Scroll to heal my Spirit Base.'

Ling Han opened his eyes and, looking at the growing light outside his window, murmured softly: "Now, I shall go and meet with Ling Zhong Kuan, that shameless old man, and give him a

surprise!"

He put on his shoes, walked towards the doorway and opened the door.

In the doorway was a tall figure, blocking his advance. This man's name was Zhang Yuan, one of Ling Zhong Kuan's lackeys.

"Young Master Han, Chief Butler has commanded that you have to stay in your room today!" Zhang Yun said with a laugh. Although the person in front of him was the son the Clan Head, he was also a notorious piece of trash, and just a joke in his eyes.

Ling Han's gaze grew cold, and said, "You dare hinder me?"

It was exactly that. The Chief Butler had told him that he couldn't allow Ling Han to come out and get in their way at all costs. If things come to head, he even had the permission to attack him! Thus, Zhang Yun smiled falsely and said, "This is a command from the Chief Butler. Young Master Han, please do not make things difficult for me."

'Ling Zhong Kuan, this old dog, is truly cautious; he has seriously wounded me and still feels insecure, going so far as to assign someone to guard the door,' Ling Han thought. This also showed how important it was to Ling Zhong Kuan for his grandson to enter Hu Yang Academy—if this hope was shattered, Ling Zhong Kuan's despair and fury could be imagined.

"Get out of my way!" Ling Han spoke coldly.

"Young Master Han, this was ordered by the Chief But—"

"Pa!"

Ling Han raised his hand and gave him a slap, speaking coldly, "What are you doing? I told you to get out of my way, and you don't?"

What, he had actually received a slap from a piece of trash? Zhang Yuan covered his face in disbelief; this piece of trash

actually dared to resist him, what kind of joke was this?

He was furious, and recalled Ling Zhong Kuan's words from before: if things come to head, he had permission to attack! He could not stop his hate from rising, and said thickly, "Young Master Han, this is what you have forced me to-"

"Pa!"

Ling Han raised his hand once more, and gave him another solid slap.

Dantian refers to Sea of Qi or similar entity. Believed to be located in the pubic region inside one's body, it's a key organ related to cultivating Qi. It is also important in Traditional Chinese Medicine, mainly in reference to Qi.

Chapter 2: Might

Zhang Yuan was about to go crazy. He had actually received two slaps from a piece of trash! In his fury, he did not consider how a piece of trash at only second layer of Body Refining Tier could slap someone at fourth layer of Body Refining Tier twice. Opening his mouth to release a great roar, he pounced at Ling Han.

There was only one thought in his head now, and that was to ruthlessly beat up this piece of trash!

His one punch was filled with great power, bringing with it a slight breeze as it headed towards his target.

Ling Han was oddly calm and immobile. In his previous life, he could naturally get rid of ten thousand of Zhang Yuan with a flick of his fingers, but now he only had the power of the second layer of Body Refining Tier.

The difference in strength was a bit problematic, but that was it. The one controlling this body was, after all, a former warrior of the Heaven Tier! His strength may have been lost, but his insight remained!

Zhang Yuan only needed to raise his hand or move his leg, and Ling Han would be able to deduce where his punch would be heading towards and where his feet would be moving to. As a result, by the time Zhang Yuan's punch flew out, Ling Han had already reacted.

"Hu!"

The fist had hit its target and Zhang Yuan revealed a cold grin. Once hit with his punch, its overwhelming power would instantly cause Ling Han to lose all means of resistance, leaving him completely at his opponent's mercy.

He had hit his target!

"En?"

Zhang Yuan's face revealed his surprise; although his punch appeared to have hit Ling Han's face, it had actually missed by a slight margin—Ling Han managed to take a step back in time and just barely managed to dodge his fist.

His fist stopped exactly in front of the tip of Ling Han's nose. It was almost touching it, so perfectly calculated as if he had used a ruler to carefully measure the distance.

'It must be a coincidence,' Zhang Yuan thought in his heart.

And it was at this moment that Ling Han's palm once more flew towards him.

"Pa!" A loud, crisp noise was heard, and Zhang Yuan received another solid slap.

"Damn it!" Zhang Yuan spat out a mouthful of spit, let out a loud shout, and once again launched his fist, punching towards Ling Han.

"Hu!" Zhang Yuan's fist once again missed. It was as if Ling Han moved at the same moment as his upper body flew backwards! Using both hands to push himself off the ground, his right foot automatically kicked out, hitting the spot in between Zhang Yuan's legs with a soft sound.

"Ao-!" Even if his cultivation was at the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, it didn't matter—he would still be unable to have the ability "iron balls", and this kick had hit its target solidly. Zhang Yuan suddenly dropped down onto his knees, both hands gripping his crotch as large droplets of cold sweat appeared on his face.

"You're so treacherous!" Zhang Yuan twitched, his whole face was so twisted it looked inhuman.

"Pa!"

Ling Han once again gave him a slap. Zhang Yuan's mouth opened, and spat out a few broken teeth. Ling Han naturally had

no sympathy for him, and said, "A dog will always be a dog; as expected, it would not be able to spit out ivory."

Zhang Yuan was extremely furious. He had actually been made to kneel on the ground and received a violent slap from someone at the second layer of Body Refining Tier... what kind of humiliation was this? He wanted to counterattack, but the kick that his privates received had directly removed all his power to resist. Every move he took made his balls hurt in agony.

But he definitely couldn't allow Ling Han to ruin Ling Zhong Kuan's important business. Otherwise, if he couldn't complete the task that the other had assigned him... going by Ling Zhong Kuan's character, he would definitely be killed.

"Han, Young Master Han, listen to me, you can't leave this place. Actually, you have been poisoned, once you leave this room, you will die of poison," his thoughts were anxious so he tried to quickly think of something that would make Ling Han stay here.

Ling Han could not help but smile. Did he think that this kind of terrible acting would be able to deceive him? He flew up and kicked Zhang Yuan away. He didn't have any free time to waste on this lackey, he had to stop Ling Zhong Kuan's evil scheme from succeeding instead. Otherwise, his father would have risked his life only to benefit others.

As for Zhang Yuan? Ling Han naturally would not take this kind of minor character into consideration. After all, Ling Zhong Kuan only needed to see him appear, and would naturally come to deal with Zhang Yuan. He had no need to dirty his own hands.

"Don't go! Don't go!" Zhang Yuan's sobs and pleas spread out from behind him. It was as if he could already see his own miserable end.

Accomplice to a villain, he only had himself to blame, and didn't deserve the slightest bit of sympathy.

Ling Han strode forwards. After a few minutes, he arrived at the inner doorway to the living room. He hadn't stepped in yet but already could hear a loud, aged voice: "Miss Liu, please, please!"

The living room had an inner and outer doorway. The inner doorway was connected to the inner court, while the outer doorway would lead to the main door. Looking out through the curtains, he could see a group of five walking in. The group comprised of five people: four male, one female.

Aside from the young woman, Ling Han could recognize the four men. They were all Ling Clan clansmen. One of them was an elderly man, the Chief Butler, Ling Zhong Kuan. Two of the other three were middle-aged men of around forty years, both Ling Zhong Kuan's sons. The last one was a young man, older than Ling Han by about one or two years, and that was none other than Ling Zhong Kuan's eldest grandson, Ling Mu Yuan.

Ling Han looked towards the only female in the group. Even with his eyesight from his previous life as one at the Heaven Tier, his eyes brightened. This young woman was truly beautiful. Her looks were like autumn, her skin as fair as the moon. She seemed to be only seventeen or eighteen, but already possessed an elegant demeanor and beauty that could bring disaster to country and people.

It was just that her aura was as cold as if she was an icy mountain, driving away any who dared to approach.

This young girl would certainly be the person sent by Hu Yang Academy, what a coincidence.

"En?"

Ling Han's eyes widened slightly. He had discovered something even more coincidental, and his lips couldn't help but reveal a smile.

Both parties sat separately in their positions as guest and host. A

few maidservants came forwards to serve fragrant tea and stood respectfully at the sides of the five people's seats.

"Has the person from the Ling Clan that you are sending to the academy gotten ready?" Liu Yu Tong opened her mouth and spoke, her voice both cold and melodious, with a bit of disdain. What she hated the most were people who would enter the academy through the back door. Although she was commanded to come here, she had no good feelings towards this future younger brother disciple.

"Ready, ready!" Ling Zhong Kuan hurriedly spoke. Although he was old enough to be the young girl's grandfather, both parties were of the same level, Element Gathering Tier.

One's skill in martial arts did not depend on age. Only the strong would be respected.

Ling Zhong Kuan even had a feeling that this young girl's level was slightly higher than his own - he was at the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, while this girl could be of the seventh layer, or maybe even eighth.

This also caused him to be even more eager to send his own grandson to Hu Yang Academy. In a few years, he would be of an even higher level than Ling Dong Xing and help him snatch the position of the Clan Head.

"Mu Yun, quickly come and greet your Elder Sister Disciple Liu!" The old man turned and spoke to Ling Mu Yuan.

"Yes, grandfather!" Ling Mu Yun spoke with great respect. Cupping his hands in Liu Yu Tong's direction, he said, "Mu Yun greets Elder Sister Disciple Liu!" There was heat in his gaze. He felt wild ambition when looking upon this cold, beautiful and incomparably strong beauty.

He believed that, with enough time spent together, he would be able to capture the heart of the beauty.

Liu Yu Tong was slightly surprised. She recalled that the person

from Ling Clan she was to escort was named Ling Han. However, it was none of her business. She was only responsible for bringing a person from the Ling Clan back to the academy.

"Since you're ready, then let's depart," she said calmly.

"Miss Liu, why don't you stay for a few days in our humble abode, so that we can express a small bit of our gratitude?" Ling Zhong Kuan hurriedly said. He wanted to get close to this young girl, and in the future, she would also be able to take care of his grandson.

"No need!" Liu Yu Tong rejected coldly, turned and was about to leave.

"Please wait!" a voice was heard, and Ling Han strode out.

The faces of Ling Zhong Kuan and his group changed slightly. However much they looked down on this piece of trash of the Ling Clan, they were the thieves right now... and thieves would naturally feel guilty.

"Younger Brother Han, weren't you injured? Return quickly to your room to rest," Ling Mu Yun reacted the quickest. He shot forwards and reached Ling Han's side, extending his hand. He wanted to fall upon Ling Han at the first moment, without giving the other any opportunity to open his mouth.

He was at the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, and his strength was not something Zhang Yuan could compare to.

It's a reference to a Chinese idiom: no ivory comes from the mouth of a dog (狗嘴里吐不出象牙), meaning "no good words are to be expected from a scoundrel".

Chapter 3: You're Sick, I Can Heal You

There were altogether nine layers of the Body Refining Tier. The first to third layers were usually called the early stage of Body Refining Tier, fourth to sixth levels were the middle stage, and seventh to ninth levels were the late stage. Martial artists from three different stages had a great disparity in their strength.

And the higher the layer, the larger the disparity was. A martial artist at the ninth layer facing a martial artist at the eighth layer would have an overwhelming advantage. However, a martial artist at the first layer of Body Refining Tier against a martial artist from the second layer would not be at such a large disadvantage.

Previously, Ling Han seemed to be only two layers below Zhang Yuan, but there was a major disparity of one stage between them. However, Ling Mu Yun was at the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, and was of the late stage of Body Refining Tier—higher than Ling Han by two stages.

This was an unbreachable gap. Even if Ling Han had once been one of the strongest Heaven Tier warriors, he would still be unable to breach this huge difference in ability. After all, the base he had now was too low.

So what to do?

Ling Han's eyes grew serious, and taking advantage of the moment the other's palm was heading towards him, he suddenly raised his fist in an attack.

Ling Mu Yun could not help showing an expression of ridicule. Although he didn't know how Ling Han managed to come here, he was a well-known piece of trash amongst the whole of Ling Clan. What kind of threat could he be to himself?

He circulated Origin Power, and his chest muscles hardened, becoming as dense as iron. So what if he received a hit from Ling

Han? The important thing now was to restrict Ling Han and not allow him the chance to open his mouth.

Sure enough.

The corners of Ling Han's mouth curved in a slight smile. The other's reaction was completely within his expectations. 'You're about to suffer this time!'

"Peng!" Because Ling Mu Yun did not make any move to dodge, this sudden punch hit its target solidly.

Ling Mu Yun still looked disdainful as he extended his hand and placed it on Ling Han's shoulder. "Young Brother Han, I'll send you back—" he hadn't finished speaking before he spat out a mouthful of blood. This wasn't even the end. He felt his chest was boiling, as if he was about to throw up all his internal organs.

He suddenly fell and sat down on the ground, his expression extremely ugly.

"Teng, teng, teng," Ling Han retreated a total of seven steps. He stopped once his back met the wall behind him.

What was this?

Ling Han had used a special technique in that punch. Its name was "Hill Separating Shock". It allowed power to pass through the opponent's defenses before exploding, which was why although Ling Mu Yun had used Origin Power to defend, Ling Han's power still managed to pass through his muscles and explode inside his body. Naturally, it became an extremely heavy blow to Ling Mu Yun.

This was also thanks to the fact that Ling Mu Yun was at the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. Otherwise, he would have been seriously injured by this punch. Even death would not be an impossibility.

To look down upon one of the strongest of the Heaven Tier warriors was to bring trouble onto oneself.

Still, seventh layer of Body Refining Tier was still seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. The rebound of Origin Power was still far from what Ling Han could handle. Thus, he too had been jarred to the point that he staggered and retreated. Due to the shock of power, his right arm was suddenly dislocated.

"Ka!" Ling Han did not even wrinkle his brow and used his left hand to twist his right arm back into position.

It wasn't until that moment that Ling Zhong Kuan and his group finally reacted. They were all angered and shocked. Their anger was because Ling Han had actually wounded Ling Mu Yun, while their shock was because they were wondering: how had this piece of trash managed to accomplish such a feat?

Meanwhile, the few maidservants were even more dumbfounded—was this still the Young Master Han they knew? How could he be so fierce that, with one punch, he had injured Young Master Mu Yun, who has always been known as a genius, to the point that the latter was throwing up blood!

"Little beast, how dare you be so ruthless!" Ling Zhong Kuan immediately shouted. "Mu Yun was only worried about you and wanted to send you back to your room, yet you did something so ruthless, you crazy dog!"

He sure was sly, immediately making a verbal counter-attack through false accusation.

Ling Mu Yun too regained his breath. When his eyes fell upon Ling Han, they were filled with murder—he was the genius of the Ling Clan, and yet he was actually injured by a piece of trash. How could his ego accept such a blow?

Ling Han completely ignored the two, and instead looked at Liu Yu Tong. "Miss, you're sick!"

This!

Ling Zhong Kuan was about to make a move, but when he heard

these words, he forcefully held back.

The other was a student from Hu Yang Academy, and Hu Yang Academy was established by the Imperial Family of Rain Country. Those who managed to enroll there would definitely have come from a strong, huge background, and would be something that far exceed the background of a person at Element Gathering Tier.

However, Ling Han actually said that the other was sick... was he seeking death?

'Very good, now implicate Ling Dong Xing too,' Chief Butler thought. Someone would do his dirty work for him and he would be able to easily take the position of Clan Head. 'Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful! Ling Dong Xing, ah, Ling Dong Xing, you would never have thought that your son is not only a piece of trash, but also someone who will ruin you!'

When Liu Yu Tong looked at Ling Han, her eyes revealed slight disgust.

She was born very beautiful, and was also the princess of one of the Eight Great Clans of the Imperial City, the Liu Clan. The Liu Clan was an existence that was only below the Imperial Family in status—and naturally, she did not lack any number of young men who tried to ingratiate themselves with her. Some would even try the opposite, pretending to be cold to attract her interest.

She naturally thought that Ling Han was the same sort of pest, only that he was using the method of "cursing" her... This was the first time that she had encountered this tactic, but this did not give her any feeling of novelty, only disgust.

"How dare you!" Ling Zhong Kuan was an observant man, and shouted in a timely manner, "Kneel down quickly and apologize to Miss Liu!"

Ling Han gave a calm smile. "In this world, aside from my parents, I will kneel down to no one!" Looking at Liu Yu Tong, he

walked towards her. He stopped once he was about three steps away.

That was because he knew this was the limit of the other's patience. If he went any closer, she would definitely take action.

He didn't want to be hit one bit.

"Since you were ten, have you been fainting every year for no reason? In the beginning, it was once a year, but it has become more and more frequent. At present, you should be fainting once every ten days," Ling Han spoke with a lowered voice, only allowing Liu Yu Tong alone to hear his words.

Liu Yu Tong's expression changed. This illness of hers was only known to a few select people, even in the Liu Clan. How did Ling Han manage to find out about it? She couldn't refrain from once again sizing up Ling Han as she asked, "You know the reason?"

"Naturally!" Ling Han proudly nodded. Otherwise, he would not speak such shocking words. "It's Three Yin Vanishing Veins. It's a kind of curse from the gods. Those who possess the Three Yin Vanishing Veins would usually only be able to live until twenty. That's because during your twentieth year, you will once again fall unconscious, forever unable to regain consciousness."

Liu Yu Tong was silent, but she believed Ling Han's words because after her symptoms became more and more serious, her family had brought her to visit many famous doctors. However, every doctor she visited could not do anything, and didn't even know the name of the illness. Still, one of them deduced that she would faint more and more frequently and, one day, she would no longer wake up.

Now, she had finally found out what illness she had, but what of it? All the famous doctors in Rain Country could not do anything, so she naturally would not think that Ling Han had any way to help.

"I can heal you," Ling Han said at that very moment.

Liu Yu Tong's heart trembled, but her face did not reveal anything. "If you can heal me, I can allow you to become a court official, or even let you have uncountable resources for cultivation."

Ling Han mustered a smile. "There is only one way to heal the Three Yin Vanishing Veins, and that is to train in Three Yin Mysterious Arts, and it just so happens that I know this art. I can teach you, but there is one condition—you have to become my follower."

Liu Yu Tong could not restrain anger in her heart. She was the princess of the Liu Clan, and was also a genius in martial arts. At the age of seventeen, she had already reached the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier. And now a puny little martial artist at second layer of Body Refining Tier actually wanted to take her in as a follower? Where did he get his confidence and boldness from?

"Don't feel wronged, because I can give you a wider horizon. I can let you rise to a higher level in martial arts. The Seven Great Vanishing Lands, the Four Great Dead Valleys, the Three Great Bottomless Oceans, have you seen them before?" Ling Han's sweet temptation followed. Although the Three Yin Vanishing Veins were a curse in nature, there was always hope in every situation. Their owner would also usually possess a Heaven Grade Spirit Base. Once trained in Three Yin Mysterious Arts, the owner would naturally soar.

Liu Yu Tong could not stop eagerness from rising within her heart. She had a passionate desire to pursue martial arts, and it was the focus of everything in her life.

Chapter 4: The First Command

Liu Yu Tong was affected in her heart, but to agree to become Ling Han's follower was an impossible request. Biting her red lips slightly, she spoke, "Change your condition!"

Ling Han smiled slightly. "You should be at the top of the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier, right? I'll gift you two verbal chants to show my sincerity: Three Yin Supporting Element, Plan of Square Path, Three Flowers Assemble at the Apex, Shattering the Approach of Heaven!"

At first, Liu Yu Tong was not concerned. This brat was only at the second layer of Body Refining Tier, what kind of shocking verbal chant could he know? He was most likely only pretending to be mysterious. But when she heard these two verbal chants, the Origin Energy within her body began to stir without reason, as if the door to the ninth level of Element Gathering Tier was opening!

She was moved. Although she knew that she would be able to break through to the ninth level of Element Gathering Tier, but the estimated time should be around a month later. However, she had a strong feeling that now she only needed about a day, no... even right at this moment, she could enter seclusion and proceed to break through!

This was too much; it was just two verbal chants, and yet they had so much effect on her!

"Those were two verbal chants from Three Yin Mysterious Art. How is it?" Ling Han smiled. Consecutively, he raised his voice and said, "Become my follower, and I will teach you supreme godly skills!"

"Pu!"

Ling Zhong Kuan and group puffed, unable to hold back their hearty laughter any longer.

What could be more hilarious than this? Just a piece of trash, and he wanted to have a genius from Hu Yang Academy become his follower? And even said he would teach her supreme godly skills! Such bragging skills and guts were truly remarkable, and probably the only things supreme and godly amongst his skills.

The idiot had no measure of his own ability; it was such a joke!

The maidservants covered their small mouths. They too knew Ling Han's background and, looking at the attitude that Ling Zhong Kuan displayed towards Liu Yu Tong, knew of how noble a status this young girl was.

Liu Yu Tong's expression turned cold, and suddenly she had arrived in front of Ling Han. Her right hand flashed out and held his neck. "Recite Three Yin Mysterious Arts, or else I will kill you!" She coldly said.

Since Ling Han dared to ask such a thing from Liu Yu Tong, he naturally foresaw such a reaction from her, so he only smiled and said, "Then kill me, I wouldn't need to wait too long before I see you on the path to the Netherworld. We can be travel companions at that time!"

Liu Yu Tong's hold tightened. Although her five fingers looked small and smooth, but at this moment, they seemed like iron claws, strangling Ling Han to the point of suffocation. Soon, his face turned red, and his eyes became bloodshot. Ling Han's four limbs started to twitch violently.

Ling Zhong Kuan and his companions had no intention of interfering. In fact, their deepest hope was to have Liu Yu Tong kill Ling Han.

"Are you going to say it or not?" Liu Yu Tong slightly loosened her grip.

Ling Han forced out a smile, and shook his head determinedly.

The current Ling Clan was an extremely dangerous place to him.

He had to find a strong bodyguard, and would not agree to whatever else Liu Yu Tong suggested to him. He had to make her his protector.

What he lacked now was time. As long as he had the time he needed to become stronger, what did a mere Ling Clan count as?

Liu Yu Tong once again tightened her grip, and Ling Han's body started to twitch violently before his four limbs suddenly drooped. There was no more movement.

'How stubborn!'

Liu Yu Tong sighed internally, and her Origin Power rushed out and restarted Ling Han's heartbeat. Exhaling, Ling Han once again opened his eyes, and took in large mouthfuls of air.

"Three years!" Liu Yu Tong said, "No more than three years, and within these three years, I will obey your commands!" Three years later, she would be twenty years old. If she would not lose consciousness and no longer awaken, then she would be completely free.

"Pu!" Ling Zhong Kuan and his group once again made a snort-like sound with their mouths; but this time, it was because of their great shock. They were completely at a loss.

Was there some problem with their hearing? They seemed to have heard Liu Yu Tong assent? Assent to become Ling Han's follower? To become an underling of a piece of trash?

This, this, this, they must have heard wrongly! Definitely so!

Ling Han came back to attention and smiled, before raising his hand. "Deal!" Three years would be long enough for him to mature. At least, it would be long enough for him to rise above the level of Ling Zhong Kuan and his groupies. He would no longer have to worry about any threat to his life.

"Pa!"

Liu Yu Tong extended her hand as well, and joined it with his upraised palm. This was a promise between martial artists.

What a delicate hand!

When their palms were joined together, Ling Han could not help but feel his heart stir. Although he was once a strong warrior of the Heaven Tier, and furthermore, the Alchemy Emperor, and there were uncountable beautiful women who threw themselves at him in his previous life, since his soul had melded with his predecessor's, it was as if he too had returned to a youthful, impulsive age. The passion that he had not experienced for a long time was burning inside his body, making him feel as if he truly had returned to the age of sixteen years old.

Ling Han enjoyed this kind of change. This was what living meant.

"Miss Liu, don't listen to the nonsense this little beast is spouting, let's return to discussing official matters," Ling Zhong Kuan interrupted. He didn't want Ling Han to continue making mess out of things. And that Zhang Yuan, he truly was an idiot. He couldn't even keep proper watch over a piece of trash! Once he returned, he'd make sure to kill him!

"Chief Butler," Ling Han coldly looked at him, "This position in Hu Yang Academy is what my father risked his own life to obtain. Now my father is risking his life in Purple Light Ground Valley, and yet you shamelessly attempt to snatch this position. Don't you feel your face burning?"

"Impudence, how dare you speak to me this way?" Ling Zhong Kuan suddenly shouted.

Liu Yu Tong previously did not bother about such a matter, but since she now had a deal with Ling Han, her attitude naturally changed. "Butler Ling, what is going on here? I need an explanation!"

Ling Zhong Kuan could pretend he did not hear Ling Han's words, but he definitely would not be able to do the same with Liu Yu Tong's words.

Not only was she the representative of Hu Yang Academ, her own ability was above his. What right did he have to ignore Liu Yu Tong's words?

He hurriedly said, "It's like this, this boy is the son of Ling Clan Head, Ling Dong Xing. Thus, Ling Dong Xing became selfish, and wanted to give this placement privately to this boy. I'm only thinking of the big picture, to make the most out of this precious position!"

"What grand words, 'thinking of the big picture'!" Ling Han smiled coldly. "Ling Zhong Kuan, are you completely without shame? This position was obtained by my father, who is risking his life even now now as we speak. What does it have to do with the clan? Why do you need to concern yourself with it? You only want to give this position to your own grandchild, and in future, when his level exceeds my father's, he would be able to help you seize the position of Clan Head.

You want to do such a shameless thing, yet claim to be doing it out of loyalty to the clan, what a shameless dog!"

Having received such a big, hearty scolding from Ling Han, Ling Zhong Kuan was furious to the point that his whole body was trembling. He had even come close to spitting out blood in anger.

"Little beast, how dare you insult me this way?" Ling Zhong Kuan was filled with wrath.

He was actually scolded by a piece of trash. If he could not heavily punish Ling Han, he would definitely be angered to the point of internal injury.

Ling Han only calmly smiled, and turned to Liu Yu Tong. "I have completely zero interest in enrolling at Hu Yang Academy. The

agreement about the position is canceled. In exchange, let Hu Yang Academy compensate me with some medicinal potions."

"Agreed!" Liu Yu Tong nodded. To expend all efforts to cultivate an individual student would, in the first place, require a large pool of medicinal potions.

"No!" Ling Zhong Kuan immediately shouted loudly. "This position belongs to Mu Yun, none of you can steal it away!"

"Old dog, is there something wrong with your hearing? This position was obviously obtained by my father, what does it have to do with you?" Ling Han scoffed. Then he looked at Liu Yu Tong, saying, "Now, this is my first command for you."

He paused for a moment before saying, "Restrain this old dog for me, I want to give a few good slaps to this shameless old bastard!"

Liu Yu Tong only hesitated for a moment before she nodded. "All right!"

Ling Han had already expressed his sincerity by gifting her two valuable verbal chants. Now, she too had to express her own sincerity.

What? Liu Yu Tong truly agreed to become Ling Han's follower?

The word "follower" seemed grand, but in truth, it was something like an attendant, a servant! A grand genius from Hu Yang Academy actually agreed to become someone else's follower? What was this inconceivable affair?

But it was reality. Liu Yu Tong had already stood up, her beautiful eyes focused on Ling Zhong Kuan and a fierce battle spirit exuded from her graceful figure.

"Elder Sister Disciple Liu, don't be deceived by this brat!" Ling Mu Yun yelled, his face filled with shock. He had no way to accept the fact that a talented, intelligent woman like Liu Yu Tong would actually be deceived by Ling Han's flowery words!

Particularly when this stunning beauty was someone he wanted to do his utmost to pursue. Now, it was as if he had eaten ten thousand flies—he felt completely suffocated.

"Are you going to surrender, or will you wait for me to act?" Liu Yu Tong asked calmly.

Chapter 5: Thrashing the Old Dog

Liu Yu Tong was absolutely confident. She was at the eight layer of Element Gathering Tier, while Ling Zhong Kuan was only at the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Even though there was only two layers' difference between the two, one was from the late stage of Element Gathering, while the other was only in the middle stage. This was the difference of a major level.

Ling Zhong Kuan was both shocked and angered. "Miss Liu, are you really going to help this little beast?"

"Old dog, watch what you say," Ling Han said unhurriedly from the side.

These words completely infuriated Ling Zhong Kuan and his companions. You keep saying old dog this, old dog that, and yet you want others to watch their mouths? So the magistrate is free to burn down houses, yet the commoners are forbidden to even light lamps?

Too overbearing!

Ling Han smiled calmly. He was overbearing, but what of it? In his previous life, he was famous for sweeping his mistakes under the rug and helping those close to him no matter whether they were in the right or in the wrong. In front of outsiders, he would defend his people. Whoever was in the right or in the wrong, he'd discuss that behind closed doors later.

Ling Zhong Kuan, his sons and grandson had gone much too far. With his personality, it'd be strange if he could tolerate such a thing.

Liu Yu Tong did not respond. Her graceful figure flew out as if she was a goddess from heaven, both hands pressing onto Ling Zhong Kuan, without any ferocity and displaying a sense of unworldly beauty.

However, Ling Zhong Kuan naturally did not feel this way. Cold sweat had already gathered on his forehead. He was in the middle stage of Element Gathering Tier, but the other was in the late stage of that Tier. This was an unbreachable gulf.

But Ling Zhong Kuan definitely did not want to be thrashed by Ling Han, this piece of trash; even more so since the latter was a member of the younger generation! Thus, he had to resist with all his might. Even if resistance was futile, he would flee if it came to the worst!

"Pang!"

He launched the Ling Clan's special skill, "Three Flip Hands", and advanced towards Liu Yu Tong.

This was a martial skill from the medium level of Yellow Grade, and was also one of the three special skills belonging to the Ling Clan. With these three skills, Ling Clan became one of the two most powerful clans in Gray Cloud Town. The power of these skills was naturally fearsome.

Unfortunately, his opponent happened to be Liu Yu Tong.

"Snapping of the Plum Hands!" The icy beauty spat out lightly. Her small hands smoothly turned over, both as a clap and as a touch. Her movement was indescribably graceful, but its power was extremely fearsome. Her hands drew past, and Ling Zhong Kuan could only repeatedly retreat, his whole face turning red.

Snapping of the Plum Hands, a martial skill from the high level of Yellow Grade!

His cultivation was suppressed, his martial skills were suppressed... if there was any advantage that Ling Zhong Kuan could claim over his opponent, then that would be multiple years worth of battle experience he had. But, the problem was that Liu Yu Tong was a genius of Martial Dao. Although she did not have adequate experience, she had a shocking battle comprehension

ability that could completely compensate for her inferior battle experience!

How could Ling Zhong Kuan not lose?

Through only fifty or sixty moves, Ling Zhong Kuan was completely restrained: his Dantian was restrained, his Origin Energy could not be circulated, and he was no stronger than a commoner.

"Grandfather!"

"Father!"

Ling Mu Yun and the rest were all shouting. They wanted to rush forward but were too afraid of Liu Yu Tong's ability, and could only look at Ling Han with fury. They were completely devoid of any intention of self-reflecting, and only felt that it was all Ling Han's fault.

If Ling Han had not appeared, then matters would have proceeded as they had planned.

Ling Han looked at Liu Yu Tong, and said, "If you make a slight change to your battle style, you will be even more powerful. For example, during your seventeenth move, you only had to further lower your right hand, and with your left hand clapping two inches further forward, you would have already restrained your opponent.

Liu Yu Tong had not been convinced at first. She only thought that Ling Han had found some kind of ancient treasury, and had thus obtained high-level secret arts. Thus, he was able to use two verbal chants to allow the barrier she faced to loosen, and make her soon be able to break through.

But now that she recalled the previous battle, the expression on her face changed slightly. Ling Han was right, if she had done as he just said, she would have been able to end this battle much sooner.

She could not help feeling a little reverence towards Ling Han.

His insight was too fearsome.

Ling Han smiled internally. Who was he? Ten thousand years ago, he was considered a royal existence in the world of martial arts! Don't tell me that he would not be able to subdue a little girl? He walked towards Ling Zhong Kuan, and raised his right hand.

"Little beast, you dare!" Ling Zhong Kuan glared. If he were to be thrashed by Ling Han, how would he face others in future?

"Pa!"

Ling Han's palm descended without any hesitation, giving Ling Zhong Kuan a heavy slap.

"Si!"

The other three members of the Ling Clan and the five maidservants simultaneously took in a breath of cold air. He actually did it...! The grand Chief Butler of the Ling Clan was actually publicly slapped by a person everyone acknowledged as trash!

"Sss, no wonder this old dog has such thick skin, just hitting him hurts my hand," Ling Han said with bared teeth.

This was natural. Body Refining Tier meant to use Origin Power to refine each part of the body and to allow every muscle to be filled with Origin Power. Every punch and kick would release a fearsome amount of power.

Ling Zhong Kuan was already in the Element Gathering Tier, and has already completely passed through the Body Refining Tier. Thus, his face was naturally completely refined by Origin Power. Someone from the middle stage of Body Refining Tier may not even able to truly injure him, and only cause him a small pain. To cause him to bleed would require the use of weapons.

However, now it was no longer the issue of being injured, but of humiliation!

Slapped by a piece of trash who was also a younger relative at the second layer of Body Refining Tier... moreover, this was done in front of five maidservants. What kind of great humiliation was this? If this matter spread out, how would he be able to face others in future?

Ling Zhong Kuan's eyes were about to spit fire. He shouted loudly, "Little beast, this matter would not end like this! You will definitely regret this, definitely!"

"Ai, you actually dare to threaten me in front of my follower, what stupidity!" Ling Han sighed, and asked Liu Yu Tong, "Someone is threatening your master, what do you say we should do?"

Liu Yu Tong's beautiful face twitched. She was the princess of the Liu Clan, how could she be able to get used to being someone's follower? However, she was still someone who kept her promises, so she immediately asked, "Do you need me to kill him?"

Hearing these words, the two sons of Ling Zhong Kuan and Ling Mu Yun were shocked. Ling Zhong Kuan was their backbone, the tree that held up their sky! If Ling Zhong Kuan died, then they too would lose all the power they had in the Ling Clan.

Ling Han shook his head with a smile. "This old dog belongs to my father, so my father should be the one to get rid of him. But..." he snapped off a table leg, and weighed it in his hand. "He will not be punished with death, but he will not be able to escape another punishment!"

"Peng!" He raised the table leg and smacked it on Ling Zhong Kuan's face. After a heavy sound rang out, Ling Zhong Kuan opened his mouth and spat out a mouthful of blood and broken teeth.

"Old dog, my father is risking his life, yet you snatch away his hope. Don't you think you deserve some thrashing?"

You have your son and grandson, and my father doesn't?

Yesterday, you counted on the fact that you were stronger than me, and cruelly beat me to the point of serious injury. Is this the kind of attitude an older relative should have? Since you are without shame, and don't want to act as an older relative, then why do I still have to bother thinking of your face and treat you as an elder?"

Ling Han thrashed him as he talked. A few hits afterwards, Ling Zhong Kuan's hair was already all over the place, his face covered with blood. He had already lost at least half the teeth in his mouth.

However, although Ling Zhong Kuan looked pitiful, it did not matter how serious his external injury was, as he would be able to recover from it quickly thanks to the powerful life energy of a martial artist. It'd take an internal injury to actually endanger his life. Thus, Ling Han continued thrashing him cheerfully, completely unconcerned that he could actually beat the other to death.

Ling Zhong Kuan no longer made any sound, but he swore in his heart that, in the future, when he had the ability to surpass Ling Dong Xing, he would definitely tear this pair of father and son into pieces.

"My hand's getting tired!" Ling Han threw away the stick, and said, "Yu Tong, accompany me on a trip."

Yu, Yu Tong?

Liu Yu Tong suddenly felt a shiver. This manner of address really gave her goosebumps!

Chapter 6: Heaven's Medicine Pavilion

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong departed. Ling Mu Yun and others wanted to stop them but didn't dare to act. Even Ling Zhong Kuan was defeated—who else in the Ling Clan had the power to resist?

None... unless Ling Dong Xing returned, that is.

However, even if Ling Dong Xing returned, which side would he be on? That was obvious.

The five maidservants had extremely colorful expressions. They have watched such an interesting show that it'd be enough for them to brag about for three years.

"Where are we going?" Liu Yu Tong asked Ling Han after leaving the Ling Clan Grounds.

"Heaven's Medicine Pavilion." Ling Han replied.

Liu Yu Tong made an "oh". She thought that Ling Han would be prescribing her medicine. After all, she was a "patient".

The two walked quickly, and after only ten minutes, they reached their destination.

Heaven's Medicine Pavilion was a very powerful existence, and had a branch in every city in Rain Country. Whether there were any branches outside of Rain Country, Ling Han wasn't too sure due to his limited knowledge. Anyway, the variety of medicinal plants and pills in Heaven's Medicine Pavilion should be more than enough as they should have every kind available on market. If something couldn't be bought there, then it definitely could not be bought in other places as well.

Ling Han entered the pavilion and approached a counter. Behind it sat a very beautiful young girl. Seeing Ling Han walk over, she immediately stood up with a smile, and said, "Hello, my name is Xiao Tao. I'm honored to be of service."

Her eyes focused on Liu Yu Tong for a moment. After all, this young girl was unusually beautiful; even she felt slightly captivated despite being female herself.

Ling Han nodded, saying, "I would like to buy Violet Lotus Grass, Blue Branch Fruit, Hundred Year Vermilion Bamboo, Red Leafed Potato, Rotted Leafed Dead Tree Roots."

Xiao Tao's face went completely blank. She had been working here for over two years, and yet had never heard even the names of these five medicinal plants. She stared blankly for a moment before saying: "Customers, I apologize, but I haven't even heard of these medicinal plants. Please wait for a moment, I will ask someone else on your behalf."

"All right," Ling Han nodded. These five medicinal plants were indeed quite uncommon, because aside from using them to concoct the Element Heart Recover Spirit Powder, they were very rarely used for other concoctions. And even though the Element Heart Recover Spirit Powder was not a high-grade concoction, it was a medicine he created personally during his previous life. Although he had taught the formula to a few people, it may not have been passed down through the generations.

After a while, they saw Xiao Tao and a middle-aged man around thirty years of age walk towards them.

"Are you the one who's causing trouble?" The middle-aged man looked at Ling Han, his face filled with disdain.

Ling Han frowned. "What do you mean, causing trouble?

"Bah, randomly naming some non-existent medicinal plants, isn't this purposely causing trouble?" The middle-aged man harrumphed, his facial expression proclaiming silently: hah, I've seen through you.

Ling Han asked, "Why do you think that I just randomly named some non-existent medicinal plants?"

"Aren't you asking nonsense? I'm a grand alchemist from the medium level of Yellow Grade. Even I have never heard of these medicinal plants, so aren't you just randomly naming them? Get out of here!" The middle-aged man waved his hand as if he was shooing away flies.

His name was Ma Da Jun, and he was indeed an alchemist at the medium level of Yellow Grade.

There were other customers in the shop, and once they heard his words, they all let out an "oh" sound, their faces filled with respect.

Alchemist was a very scarce and noble profession. There were four major grades in the profession - Heaven, Earth, Black, Yellow. Every grade was further divided into three minor levels - high, medium and low levels. However, even an alchemist from the medium level of the Yellow Grade was a welcomed and respected existence, someone all major powers would fight to have.

It was like that also in Grey Cloud Town. There was only one alchemist of this rank, and he worked in Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. Usually, he didn't even need to concoct any medicinal pills; the purpose behind his presence was simply being an overseer.

Thus, Ma Da Jun naturally had enough of a reason to be prideful.

"Even Alchemist Ma has said so, this brat must indeed have come to cause trouble."

"What a joke, he actually came to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion to misbehave. Where did this fool come from?"

"Maybe he's come to please the audience?"

Everyone was on the side of Ma Da Jun. An alchemist was an extremely noble existence, and thus their partiality was hardly surprising.

Ling Han was slightly irritated, and said, "If you've never heard of them, that's because of your own lack of ability. How can you

without any basis proclaim that others are just causing trouble? Go and ask for the most well-educated person in your shop, I shall speak to him."

"Who do you think you are to command me?" Ma Da Jun similarly looked extremely unhappy. He had come out personally to expose him, so why was he still here, being a pest? Moreover, Ma Da Jun was the person in charge of this Heaven's Medicine Pavilion! Who else would be better educated than him here?

Naturally, that was excluding Grandmaster Zhu. The other was just here on a holiday when he suddenly had a flash of inspiration, and so was just borrowing this Heaven's Medicine Pavilion's facilities to concoct pills.

Seeing this, the corners of Liu Yu Tong's lips slightly lifted, and looked a little expectant.

She would not act this time.

Heaven's Medicine Pavilion was a colossal existence. Even the imperial family of Rain Country would have to treat them with respect! She was only a member of the younger generation of the Liu Clan, so she definitely could not accompany Ling Han to mess around in this place.

Aren't you quite capable? Why are you being embarrassed now?

Although she agreed to become Ling Han's follower, it was just temporary. Moreover, with her pride, that was something she was most unwilling to do—at least at present. Thus, she really wanted to see Ling Han's embarrassed face.

However cold a woman was, she would still want to retaliate when made unhappy.

"Get lost!" Ma Da Jun brushed off his hands, looking impatient.

"You won't regret this?" Ling Han slowly said.

"Haha, what can you do to me?" Ma Da Jun felt unreasonably

tickled. This young man actually dared to threaten him.

The other people in the shop too looked as if they were watching a comedy. Was this young man a spoiled young master from some clan? However, even if he was the son of the clan head of either one of the two Great Clans, he would still not be qualified to stand against a medium level alchemist of the Yellow Grade.

Ling Han only smiled, and turned towards Liu Yu Tong.

A feeling of despise flashed through Liu Yu Tong's heart—was he going to ask her to take action again? However, she only heard Ling Han say, "Help me shout loudly 'You've put too much Copper Valley Sand!' Do it three times, the louder the better."

What did that mean?

Liu Yu Tong's beautiful eyes widened, but when she saw the confidence on Ling Han's face, her heart trembled and she couldn't help but do as he told her, "You've put too much Copper Valley Sand! You've put too much Copper Valley Sand! You've put too much Copper Valley Sand!"

She was a person from the Element Gathering Tier, so her shout was like a lion's roar.

"You're both crazy, chase them out of here!" Ma Da Jun furiously said to the two guards in the shop.

"Peng!" A loud noise echoed out, as if something had exploded—any alchemist would be able to tell that this noise was caused by an exploding furnace, something that every alchemist would experience.

"Tong, tong, tong, tong!" A series of footsteps was heard from upstairs. Very quickly, a white-haired elder appeared at the top of the staircase, and shot right in front of Liu Yu Tong like an arrow, excitedly asking, "How do you know that I've put in too much Copper Valley Sand?"

The elder's figure still had some traces of suffering from a

furnace's explosion: his brow, beard and hair were all partially burned and half his face was blackened with ashes; his clothes were likewise in disarray, covered in singes. Being intently stared at by such an old man, the odd feeling within Liu Yu Tong's heart could be imagined.

But what caused her greater surprise was the silver emblem hanging on one side of the elder's chest. That was the sign of an alchemist, and silver represented... Black Grade! One emblem represented low level.

This elder was a low level alchemist of the Black Grade!

Goodness, this kind of existence, even in the great clans of the imperial city, would be considered a revered guest. Even the Clan Head of her Liu Clan, faced with the other, would have to very politely address the other as "Grandmaster".

But now, this "Grandmaster" was actually looking at her with a fawning gaze, his face filled with the desire to seek knowledge. How would Liu Yu Tong not feel odd?

She couldn't help looking at Ling Han. How many other mysteries was this young man hiding?

Chapter 7: Grandmaster Zhu

"Pu!"

Seeing this scene, everyone in this medicine shop could not help exhaling sharply in shock.

Even if there were some who did not know Grandmaster Zhu He Xin, they could tell from the silver emblem hanging on his breast that he was a low level alchemist of the Black Grade.

Black Grade...!

To the common people, this was an indescribably noble identity that could be compared to the high-ranking court officials of the empire! It was even more noble a status than a mayor of a city enjoyed. But someone like this, a Grandmaster, displayed such an expression just because of one word... how could they not be shocked?

And the cause of everything was a young man.

How was this possible!

Many people were driven mad. This fact was something they couldn't accept, even if they shattered their heads!

Ma Da Jun particularly looked quite aghast. [This Grandmaster Zhu](#) was an important personage in Heaven's Medicine Pavilion branch in Rain Country. He actually wasn't even able to see such a person normally. He had only heard of some of the other's affairs through rumors.

So how could he not be shocked, seeing this expression on the Grandmaster's face?

Could it be that this brat was not here to cause trouble? Were the medicinal plants he named real?

Ling Han sniffed a little, and said, "Well, you're quite clever, making a few changes to the formula for the Wind and Fire Pill,

using Purple Back Bear Pill, Thousand Shred Cane and Black Rock Powder to replace a few of the more valuable ingredients. In this manner, there would not be much difference in the medicinal effects, yet production cost could be greatly lowered."

"How did you know?" Zhu He Xin suddenly turned around and looked at Ling Han in shock, asking in a rough voice. This was his secret! He had planned on publicizing it only after he had succeeded, so as to give a good shock to some of his old friends and rivals!

Ling Han's smile widened, and he said, "Naturally, I used my nose to sniff it out."

Are you a monster? You found out just by using your nose? Pill formulae were an extremely valuable item, and no alchemist would easily reveal their formulae to others. To an alchemist, It was something as important as martial arts skills to a warrior!

The problem was, even Zhu He Xin himself had not yet successfully completed his research on the improved medicinal pill formula, but Ling Han could analyze the formula just by using his nose! How could Zhu He Xin not be completely shocked by this?

"Your improved formula is feasible, but Copper Valley Sand is too strong, and the merging point is too high. So no matter how well ground it is, there will still be remnants within the completed pill, which will affect the quality of the pill. You can try using the teeth of Raging Flames Leopard as a replacement," Ling Han suggested. In his previous life, he had casually corrected a few people, and they later went on to become Grandmaster-level Alchemists.

Zhu He Xin immediately started calculating in his heart, muttering, "Raging Flames Leopard's elemental alignment is fire, which just happens to neutralize the Yin alignment of the Black Rock Powder, and when reaching a specific high temperature, will melt easily, so there won't be any remnants in the medical pill... wonderful, truly wonderful! Why didn't I think of that?"

The old man was dumbfounded. Looking at Ling Han with a fierce gaze, he immediately said: "Young friend, please accompany me upstairs, and allow me to receive you," of course, the reception part was false. He wanted to sneakily hoax him into revealing a few more pill formulae.

From what he's seen, Ling Han should be an heir to some influential family well-versed in alchemical arts.

Ling Han smiled, but said, "I can't!"

"Why not?" Zhu He Xin became frantic. This boy was very possibly a walking encyclopedia of pill formulae!

"Someone told me to get out," Ling Han said in a deliberate tone, glancing at Ma Da Jun.

"Putong!" Ma Da Jun fell onto his knees. At this moment, he really wanted to cry but had no tears.

How should he have known that Zhu He Xin would treat Ling Han this way? Had he known, he would have even respected Ling Han as an elder! Now what was he supposed to do? He couldn't stop the ugly expression on his face from showing.

The other people in the shop were all watching and shaking their heads in their hearts. Had Ma Da Jun been slightly more polite in his speech and not so forceful in his attitude, he would still have a way out now.

He had brought this onto himself!

Zhu He Xin immediately turned his head, his wrinkled face showing a fearsome anger.

How could he not be angered?

As an alchemist, the one thing he sought in his entire life was to raise his own level in the arts of alchemy and obtain more pill formulae. Now, here was an obvious "Encyclopedia of Pill Formulae", and that guy actually asked him to get lost? Did he bore

some hatred towards him?

"Fool!" He shouted in anger, "What's going on here? Explain to me!"

Ma Da Jun wanted to die; under the interrogation of Zhu He Xin, he did not dare not to answer, so he just recounted the incident that happened previously while stammering. Although he did not attempt to distort the facts, the insulting words he spoke to Ling Han were naturally not repeated. He wasn't that much of an idiot.

"What great authority you have!" Zhu He Xin immediately gave him a hearty slap, causing Ma Da Jun to spin around on the spot three times before finally stopping, completely silly from the beating. "You haven't heard of them so that means they don't exist? Should all the hundreds of thousands of medicinal plants you haven't heard of be removed from this world then? Let me tell you, these five medicinal plants indeed do exist!"

Violet Lotus Grass can be found in Eaglewood Valley, Blue Branch Fruit can be found in one of the valleys in Hundred Linked Mountains, Hundred Year Vermilion Bamboo grows in areas of extreme Yang, Red Leafed Potato is found underneath volcanic ash! Only Rotted Leafed Dried Tree Roots is rarer, it can only be found underneath the old roots of a tree that has rotted for more than one hundred years!"

"I was wrong! I was wrong!" Ma Da Jun kept apologizing in panic. What else was there to suspect if even Zhu He Xin himself had said so? He stretched out his hand and slapped himself, saying, "I shouldn't have been conceited, I shouldn't have behaved like a snob!"

Zhu He Xin once again turned to Ling Han, and said, "Young friend, many apologies, many apologies."

He suddenly started, because he recalled that before he left his master, he had heard his master mention a particular formula. That was a medication used for healing injuries inflicted on the

Spirit Base, and it required the five types of medicinal plants that Ling Han had wanted to buy.

That time, his master had sighed with regret and said that although this formula did not require to be refined into the form of a medicinal pill, the effects were unexpectedly excellent. Unfortunately, possibly due to passage of time, only the names of some of the main ingredients were known, yet the actual method of creation was long lost.

As such, it left a very strong impression on him, and now he had suddenly recalled everything.

Could it be that Ling Han was buying these medicinal ingredients to concoct the Element Heart Recover Spirit Powder?

The old man couldn't help the increasingly rapid beating of his heart. If he could get this formula and burn it as an offering to his late master, then his esteemed master would feel happy in the afterlife!

"Young friend, the medicinal ingredients you're buying, could it be that you want to concoct-

"Element Heart Recover Spirit Powder," Ling Han nodded, and truthfully said, "My Spirit Base has been slightly injured."

"Pu!"

Ma Da Jun immediately puffed in shock. Damage to the Spirit Base was fatal to any martial artist; from what he knew, there was no way to completely recover from it! But Ling Han's words seemed to show that coming up with a remedy for it was a piece of cake for him!

Liu Yu Tong's eyes brightened as well. She was Liu Clan's princess, and although she herself was not an alchemist, she knew that there were a lot of extremely valuable medicinal pills, like the Permanent Moon Pill, that could heal injuries to the Spirit Base.

The problem was, the value of the Permanent Moon Pill was

indescribably high. Even the Liu Clan would need to sacrifice colossal wealth to get merely one of them... and they might not be able to buy one even then!

Ling Han, ah, Ling Han, how many secrets are you hiding?

She was getting more and more curious about Ling Han. Now, even if Ling Han said that he didn't want her as a follower anymore, she reckoned her personal curiosity would make her stay.

It's unclear whether the Yellow grade alchemist guy is surnamed Zhu or Ma. Sometimes raws say Zhu 朱, sometimes they say Ma 马, and yet they clearly refer to the same person... Ma appears more often, especially in the previous chapter (fifty-fifty in this one) and was first, plus while this Zhu is different than the higher-ranked alchemist's surname, it has exactly the same pronunciation, including the tone, hence it is possible that author confused their surnames and even then made a typo or something.

Chapter 8: Subdued

"Young friend, please take a seat!" Zhu He Xin politely invited, displaying extreme solicitousness, without showing any arrogance typical of a Black Grade alchemist. "I can guarantee that within five days, no, three days, I'll have the medicinal ingredients that you require delivered to you."

"Good!" Ling Han nodded. In his last life, his position was at the absolute summit, but he was weak now, so he might as well befriend a couple more people and extend his social network.

Meanwhile, for a small character like Ma Da Jun, a small punishment was enough. He would not lower himself to the same level as him.

Zhu He Xin was delighted and hurriedly led Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong to an elegant study on the third floor.

"If I may ask, who is young friend's master?" the old man asked.

"I have no master, I'm self-taught," Ling Han said. In his last life, he had visited many powerful authorities of alchemical arts and mastered everything. In the end, he formed his own faction, and became the greatest alchemist in history.

Zhu He Xin naturally did not believe him. Ling Han was so young —how was it possible for him to have such a deep knowledge of alchemy? However, he was very impressed with Ling Han, and had the intention to make him join Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. Thus, he asked him numerous questions to examine Ling Han's skill level.

Ling Han calmly answered all his questions. He was a Grandmaster Alchemist; whether in the past or in the present, who could compare to him in the field of alchemy? As their conversation continued, the leading role gradually fell into his hands; he occasionally caused Zhu He Xin to rack his brains in

ponder, and the old man's face became more and more respectful.

There was no seniority in academics; whoever has the ability becomes the teacher.

In the beginning, the old man kept addressing him "young friend", placing himself on a higher position, but very quickly, he changed his manner of address, and addressed Ling Han as "fellow alchemist". In the end, with his forehead beaded with cold sweat, he couldn't help standing up and respectfully standing at Ling Han's side to listen closely to his teachings, as if he was an apprentice. It was just like when he used to be taught by his esteemed master...

In his heart, Ling Han had already reached a very high position. He even had a kind of feeling—if only considering theory and insight, Ling Han had far surpassed his own master!

"Grandmaster, may I follow by your side, and continue to listen to your teachings?" When Zhu He Xin said this, Liu Yu Tong was almost shocked to death. But after she carefully thought it over, it seemed to be the natural order of events.

However, if this was known by the other Great Clans in the imperial city, she was afraid that everyone would die of envy!

This was an actual Black Grade Alchemist! Although he was only a low level one, the title of Black Grade was more than enough, wasn't it?

Liu Yu Tong was astonished, and her resistance to the idea of being Ling Han's follower decreased slightly—even a grandmaster alchemist like Zhu He Xin was begging to follow Ling Han, so what did she have to complain about?

Ling Han shook his head, and said, "At this moment, I have no intention to take on any disciples." In truth, Zhu He Xin's talent in the field of alchemy, in his opinion, could only be considered ordinary. In the past, he had taken on three disciples, and all three

of them were exceptionally talented.

Zhu He Xin only felt that it was a pity, and furthermore fully realized that Ling Han refused because his natural talent in alchemy was ordinary, therefore he was not qualified to become his disciple. He too felt that this was natural. After all, Ling Han's knowledge and skill in the field of alchemy was at too high a level, one which he was only able to admire and look up to from afar. To become the other's disciple was indeed too much to hope for.

Liu Yu Tong was dumbstruck that Ling Han had actually refused! He refused!

This person was an actual low level Black Grade alchemist, and as long as Zhu He Xin agreed, even the imperial family of Rain Country would fall over themselves to meet him, and maybe would even gift him with a princess's hand in marriage. However, Ling Han had actually refused him without much consideration!

This guy... was really incomprehensible.

"However, if you encounter any trouble with understanding something, you can still come to the Ling Clan to look for me whenever you like," Ling Han said.

"Many thanks, Grandmaster, many thanks, Grandmaster!" Zhu He Xin repeatedly raised his clasped hands in Ling Han's direction, his face revealing the utter joy he was feeling.

Liu Yu Tong felt speechless in her mind. If this scene was seen by others, they would definitely be so shocked that their eyeballs would fall out of their sockets! A person with the noble status of a Black Grade alchemist was actually performing the salutations of a disciple in front of Ling Han, feeling honored merely because of being able to visit him!

"En, then I'll take my leave," Ling Han said.

"Let me see you off, Grandmaster!" Zhu He Xin quickly said.

"Oh, right. Yu Tong, did you bring any money with you? Help me pay for medicine in advance," Ling Han turned towards Liu Yu Tong and said.

Liu Yu Tong, of course, now knew that this medication was intended for Ling Han himself and not for her illness, so she couldn't stop her lips from twitching, thinking that this guy really knew how to make the best use of everything. He had just taken her in as a follower and now he was aiming for her purse...

"No need, no need!" Zhu He Xin hurriedly waved his hands. The alchemical knowledge he heard from Ling Han today was invaluable; how could he bear to take Ling Han's payment for the medicinal ingredients? "Great Master, please do allow me to express some of my gratitude by waving the payment."

Ling Han pondered for a moment, then said, "Then do as you like."

Though he had only casually taught Zhu He Xin a bit, he was the actual Alchemy Emperor. This little bit of teaching would be enough for Zhu He Xin to benefit from for the rest of his life.

Zhu He Xin immediately looked delighted. To be able to do something for Ling Han, even if it was only such a small favor, made him extremely elated. He even felt honored!

"Then I'll buy some Return Origin Pills," Ling Han said after thinking for a while.

"Return Origin Pill, this kind of cheap thing, how can I let Grandmaster buy it? Anyway, it's something I can casually create, so naturally, it'll be a gift to Grandmaster," Zhu He Xin quickly said.

Liu Yu Tong was once again rendered speechless. Return Origin Pill could allow a martial artist to quickly recover his Origin Power. It was an indispensable support during combat, and it was not something simple that could be "casually created".

Although Ling Han only required the lowest level Lower Grade Return Origin Pills, even one of them would be worth three silver coins at least.

Zhu He Xin was very generous, immediately giving Ling Han one hundred Return Origin Pills. If it was not for the fact that Ling Han was still only in the Body Refining Tier and could only take low-level Return Origin Pills, he would definitely have presented him with high-level Return Origin Pills instead.

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong descended down the stairs and left, seen off by Zhu He Xin.

"Where are we going now?" Liu Yu Tong could not help asking after the two had walked for awhile.

Ling Han smiled slightly, and said, "Naturally home, to wait for the medicine to be delivered." Without healing the Spirit Base first, he had no way to start cultivating.

Liu Yu Tong curiously asked, "You really know how to concoct pills?"

"There should be no one on this world who knows that better than me," Ling Han bluntly said.

"You're bragging!" Liu Yu Tong harrumphed. Although Ling Han had completely subdued Zhu He Xin, Zhu He Xin was only a Black Grade alchemist. There were still alchemists of Earth Grade and Heaven Grade above him!

Ling Han did not argue with her. His status had long been engraved in history.

"Why didn't you agree to let Grandmaster Zhu follow by your side? He's not only an alchemist, but also a warrior of Gushing Spring Tier," Liu Yu Tong asked.

Ling Han paused in his step, turned over to look at her, and continued walking forwards, saying: "First, your Spirit Base is of Heaven Grade, and you've now reached the eighth level of Element

Gathering Tier, so you're one step away from breaking through to Gushing Spring Tier. Second, I don't need anyone to concoct pills for me. Third, if I really need to have someone by my side, then a beautiful girl is far easier on the eyes than an old man."

Liu Yu Tong could not help but be speechless. However, his words did cause her to be a little pleased deep within her heart.

"We'll go home first. I still have to teach you Three Yin Mysterious Arts," Ling Han said.

Liu Yu Tong could not help feeling a bit excited and her steps quickened. The illness that caused her to fall asleep without reason has troubled her for far too many years.

The two returned to the Ling Clan Residence. On the whole way, all servants they saw were wearing peculiar expressions. They had heard of what had happened that morning—that the Chief Butler had actually been trashed by Young Master Trash. It wasn't too surprising for them to know about it, for this kind of news would naturally spread throughout the whole clan quite quickly.

Ling Han pretended to see nothing and brought Liu Yu Tong to his room to start teaching her Three Yin Mysterious Arts.

"Aren't you afraid I'll go back on my word?" Liu Yu Tong suddenly asked when Ling Han was about to recite the arts.

"Will you?" Ling Han asked in return.

Chapter 9: Guiding Cultivation

If it was half a day ago, Liu Yu Tong really would consider casting Ling Han aside. Get the cultivation technique through deception first, and then compensate Ling Han with some material objects—is what she thought. Who asked Ling Han to ignore her noble status as the princess of a noble family and insist on having her as his follower?

Yet now, she was hesitant. The reserved nature of a girl caused her to really want to leave Ling Han's side, but once she recalled the endless miracles Ling Han had displayed, she wanted to stay at his side, curious to see where his limits were.

"Maybe yes, maybe not. Who can say for sure?" She gave him an ambiguous answer.

Ling Han laughed heartily. If Liu Yu Tong had solemnly vowed to be steadfastly loyal to him, he would not have believed her. However, he was a grand warrior of the Heaven Tier and the Alchemy Emperor! How could he be unable to subdue this little slip of a girl?

"Take off your clothes," he casually said.

Liu Yu Tong suddenly looked furious. Could Ling Han want to force her to sacrifice her body in exchange for teaching her the cultivation technique? Although she didn't want to die, and really did very much want her illness cured, if she had to use her body in exchange, then she would rather die!

"Don't misunderstand!" Ling Han said with a smile, "I only want to guide you in the circulation path of the Origin Power. This particular cultivation technique requires the Origin Power in your body to circulate through many odd paths and can't be explained simply through words. You should know yourself that [the slightest difference leads to a huge loss](#), so if there is the tiniest discrepancy in the circulation of the cultivation technique... that's why we

must make sure that there is no any discrepancy or error at all."

Liu Yu Tong paused. Ling Han's words were not false. There were uncountable veins and arteries within human body. If there was the tiniest bit of error in the circulation path of Origin Power, then the results would be vastly different.

The problem was that she was an unmarried young lady; how could she take off all her clothes and allow a man's finger to roam over her whole body?

She considered for a long while, then suggested a compromise—she would keep her undergarments on, and Ling Han would use a chopstick instead of a finger in guiding the circulation of her Origin Power.

"Get out first!" Liu Yu Tong said, pointing outside.

"Hey hey hey, this is my room!" Ling Han laughed, but he still stood up and walked outside. He still had this little bit of gentlemanly character.

He waited for a long while before he finally heard Liu Yu Tong say, "You can come in now."

Ling Han entered the room to see Liu Yu Tong seated on the bed, her beautiful figure concealed by a bedsheets, her beautiful hair falling over her shoulders like a waterfall. She was very enchanting.

'She really is a captivating and extraordinarily beautiful girl,' Ling Han thought. Even considering the demanding eyesight he had in his last life, he couldn't help but admit that the charm of this icy beauty caused his heart to slightly stir.

Snow-white teeth biting red lips, beautiful eyes roaming around... looking both resentful and pitiful, Liu Yu Tong slowly slipped out of the bedsheets, and her beautiful, jade-like figure appeared.

There was only a tube top on her upper body, and her fair,

smooth skin was like the highest grade of jade, exuding an entrancing luster. She wore underpants on her lower body, but she had torn the trouser legs from her upper thigh downwards, revealing two long, straight legs. They were neither too plump nor too thin, rather, they could be considered perfect, causing one's heartbeat to speed up.

Seeing Ling Han's roaming eyes, she couldn't help feeling embarrassed. Her beautiful, jade-like face blushed, adding on to her allure.

Goodness, she was supposed to be an icy beauty, but now that she was blushing, she suddenly became a universal temptation, looking so enchanting that even Ling Han's Heaven Tier temperament from his last life was slightly disturbed, causing him to want to devour this captivating little demon.

But he quickly came back to his senses and said, "Sit in a cross-legged position, I'll be teaching you the first level of mental cultivation method from Three Yin Mysterious Arts."

He recited it word by word. At first Liu Yu Tong couldn't enter into the right state of mind. After all, she was almost naked in the same room with a man, but her martial artist's heart very quickly defeated her embarrassment as she listened carefully to Ling Han's verbal chants, committing them to her memory.

Ling Han spoke very quickly, but Liu Yu Tong showed shocking talent—it was almost like whatever she heard, she would never forget. Ling Han only recited everything twice, and Liu Yu Tong already managed to remember almost a thousand words' worth of verbal chants.

This was only the first step. The next step, and also the key factor, was the circulation path of the Origin Power.

Ling Han, using a chopstick in place of his finger, lightly drew all over Liu Yu Tong's beautiful figure, guiding her in circulating her Origin Power.

Once, twice... only three times were enough for Liu Yu Tong to already circulate her Origin Power according to the new cultivation technique. She truly deserved the title genius!

Ling Han hurriedly departed from the room. This little demon was really too enchanting. He seemed to have overestimated his own willpower. If things continued in the same way, he very possibly would end up taking advantage of and pushing down this entrancing beauty.

Since Liu Yu Tong had already started cultivation, she would definitely not regain consciousness in the short term. Thus Ling Han decided to just sit outside and similarly begin cultivating.

However, he was not cultivating Five Elements Heaven Grade skill. Instead, he began cultivating Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

Because his Spirit Base was not healed yet, he did not dare to take any risks. If his Spirit Base was injured further, then it would not be healed even by Element Heart Recover Spirit Powder.

The circulation of Indestructible Heaven Scroll was like a bottomless pit, very quickly expending the little Origin Power he had within his body to refine his muscles, veins and bones and make them stronger.

If it was cultivated to the limit, then the body would neither deteriorate nor age. Even if a meteor crashed into him, the meteor would shatter while he would be completely unharmed.

Of course, he was much too far from reaching that state.

After merely five minutes, the Origin Power stored within his body was completely exhausted, so he swallowed a Return Origin Pill to quickly recover the Origin Power within his body and then continue cultivation.

Each medicine has poisonous properties. In the beginning, the Return Origin Pill could exhibit the best effects, but as the amount he took increased, the immunity of his body to the pill's effects

also largely increased, causing the pill's effects to worsen until, finally, he could only recover less than one tenth of his Origin Power after taking a pill.

Ling Han stopped. The day had ended; to continue cultivation would be of no effect.

However, his improvement was very obvious.

His muscles, veins and bones have all become slightly stronger. According to his estimate, this kind of strength would compare to the third level of Body Refining Tier.

No wonder it was called Heaven Scroll! It was awesome!

In his last life, Ling Han had also cultivated a few recovery type skills, like Golden Body Secrets and Boulder Technique, which allowed the body to become stronger. However, their effects could not compare to Indestructible Heaven Scroll's effectiveness. The difference between them was like that between heaven and earth.

That was normal. If Indestructible Heaven Scroll was not that good, how could it be possible that a warrior of the Heaven Tier would need to spend over ten thousand years to comprehend it? Not to mention, even then it was only the first layer he comprehended!

'However, cultivating this Indestructible Heaven Scroll really expends a lot of Origin Power, and would still need a large amount of valuable medicines to support refining the body! This would definitely delay my cultivation! However, this Indestructible Heaven Scroll has too great a power; the delay would be worth it. My Spirit Base is Immortal Grade, anyway.

I shouldn't think about the highest tier of neither deteriorating nor aging body yet. The first level of Indestructible Heaven Scroll is also further divided into four tiers, which are respectively the Dead Tree Tier, the Rock Cliff Tier, the Iron Sheet Tier and the Diamond Tier.

Once I reach the Dead Tree Tier, my body would be like a dead tree. Attacks on me would be as if hurting a dead tree without damaging its life. I can even have my body be like a dead tree, without any life signs. No one would be able to tell that I would still be alive. Once I reach the Diamond Tier, then no matter how heavy the injury, it could be recovered in an instant; even a torn off limb would be able to recover. It's practically a godly skill!'

"En?"

Ling Han turned around and looked at the door to the inner chamber. The curtain moved, and a goddess-like figure walked out, her lightly blushing face incomparably graceful, beautiful and entrancing.

"You've completed cultivating the first level of Three Yin Mysterious Arts?" Ling Han said with a little surprise.

"En!" Liu Yu Tong nodded, slightly afraid to meet Ling Han's eyes. An odd feeling was stirring to life within her heart, one that she had never felt before.

'This girl really is a genius!' Ling Han thought in his heart.

差之毫厘失之千里, meaning "the slightest difference leads to a huge loss" is an idiom equivalent to the English "a miss is as good as a mile".

Here, those interested in some, cough, research can copy-paste the following word in google images: 抹胸. It refers to those bigger pieces of underwear that extend to the upper stomach (罩)

Chapter 10: Healing the Spirit Base

Three Yin Mysterious Arts has a total of nine layers, corresponding with the nine tiers of martial arts. The ninth layer would be the Heaven Tier, which was the highest tier that Ling Han had reached in his previous life.

Out of the many cultivation techniques circulated all over the world, none have broken through to the tenth tier, which was the Shattering Void Tier. That was why Ling Han travelled all over the world to visit all kinds of ancient historical sites.

The first layer of the cultivation technique known as Three Yin Mysterious Arts corresponded to the Body Refining Tier, a stage Liu Yu Tong had long passed through. It was naturally easy for her to cultivate it again. It was just like a high school student doing the homework of a junior high student.

But the problem was, she had actually completed cultivation of the first layer within such a short time! Wasn't her talent way too strong?

But thinking once more, Liu Yu Tong had the Three Yin Vanishing Veins, and Three Yin Mysterious Arts was originally formulated for someone who possessed such veins, so her impressive cultivation speed was something normal.

Ling Han nodded, saying, "Then I'll continue to teach you the second layer. As long as you are able to cultivate the majority of the third layer, you will have completely suppressed the Three Yin Vanishing Veins, and will no longer be affected by them."

The third layer—in other words, she would reach strength equal to the Gushing Spring Tier.

However, Liu Yu Tong was already at the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Moreover, she could already sense the juncture to break through to the ninth layer, so she was only one step away

from breaking through to the Gushing Spring Tier.

Liu Yu Tong couldn't stop the blush on her beautiful face from increasing even more. To begin teaching her the second layer now, wouldn't that mean that she would have to take off her clothes again?

"Don't let your imagination run wild!" Ling Han said in reprimand.

Liu Yu Tong could not help fiercely glaring at him. Her imagination was not running wild; rather, she was afraid that Ling Han's imagination was running wild instead!

The two once again returned to the inner chamber and, just like the previous time, Liu Yu Tong removed her robe, allowing her alluring, beautiful figure to appear practically naked in front of Ling Han. As the saying went, the first time is awkward, the second is easy; although she was still very embarrassed, it was much better than the first time.

When Ling Han taught her the second layer, it was almost night. So, he had servants deliver two servings of dinner, of which he himself ate a large portion, leaving a smaller one for Liu Yu Tong.

Women, you see, have small appetites, so a small portion was enough.

After about three hours had passed, Liu Yu Tong once again exited and said in extreme surprise, "My cultivation speed now is actually ten times faster than it used to be!" This meant that once she broke through to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, she'd need less than two months to be able to reach the top before tackling the Gushing Spring Tier.

Too fast!

Ling Han could not help smiling, and said, "Three Yin Mysterious Arts is a Heaven Grade cultivation technique."

Heaven Grade cultivation technique!

Liu Yu Tong almost fainted. What did Heaven Grade cultivation technique mean?

Let's just put it this way: the reason why the Liu Clan had become one of the Eight Great Clans in the Imperial City was because they had a scroll named <<Red Cloud Secrets>>, which was a Black Grade medium level cultivation technique. At the same time, the Imperial Qi Clan was able to secure its position as the Lord of the Land because they had a scroll named <<Seven Massacre Skills>>, which was a Black Grade high level cultivation technique!

In other words, a Black Grade high level cultivation technique would allow the creation of an empire, and a Black Grade medium level cultivation technique would allow a power to become one of the great clans of Rain Country and thrive for a thousand years!

Now then, what significance did a Heaven Grade cultivation technique have?

It was indescribably valuable!

If Ling Han had said from the start that he would teach her a Heaven Grade cultivation technique, she would definitely have treated him as if he was crazy. You couldn't blame her—after all, if a puny, little clan from Gray Cloud Town could have a Heaven Grade cultivation technique, then wouldn't this world be completely messed up?

But now, she couldn't not believe him, for she had personally experienced it.

"This is an actual Heaven Grade cultivation technique, and you're just going to teach it to me like this?" Her heart trembled—there was an unexplainable throbbing within her heart.

Ling Han smiled. This Three Yin Mysterious Arts indeed was a Heaven Grade cultivation technique, but could only be cultivated by the possessor of the Three Yin Vanishing Veins. It was useless in

anyone else's hands, so of course he did not fear that Liu Yu Tong would divulge it.

Moreover, he had obtained Indestructible Heaven Scroll, a truly supreme godly cultivation technique! Just comprehending its first layer required ten thousand years! Compared with this, no matter what kind of Heaven Grade cultivation technique it was... bah! It was completely worthless!

Naturally he would not tell her that. Instead, he said, "You are my follower, I'm never a miser to my own people!"

This was not a lie—he had always swept any mess made by those close to him under the rug, and was very generous towards his own people.

Liu Yu Tong could not stop an expression of embarrassment from appearing on her beautiful face. According to her understanding, the words "own people" had a completely different meaning. After a while, she finally said, "Don't worry, without your permission, I will not teach this cultivation technique to anyone else."

"Whatever," Ling Han said. There would only be one possessor of the Three Yin Vanishing Veins every few thousand years anyway, so even if she taught it to someone else, it would be lost through the long passage of time—to anyone else, this was a cultivation technique that couldn't even compare to Yellow Grade low level cultivation technique since no one else could cultivate in it. Who would actually want to preserve it for thousands of years?

Liu Yu Tong could not help feeling a little disappointed. Previously her heart was trembling in excitement, and if Ling Han had just used a few sweet words to pamper her a bit, her good feelings towards Ling Han would definitely increase; however, Ling Han simply did not bear such thoughts, and so he missed an excellent opportunity.

She walked towards the table, and began to eat. While slowly eating, she said, "From tomorrow onwards, I will have to enter

seclusion to tackle the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so I won't be able to follow you around in this period."

"Ha ha, don't worry, don't worry! I have no plans to go anywhere these two days, I will simply wait for Zhu He Xin to deliver the medicinal ingredients. I plan to heal my Spirit Base first before doing anything else," Ling Han said. He treasured this second life very much. Now that his Spirit Base was injured, he definitely did not want to take unnecessary risks and ruin his own foundation in martial arts.

Liu Yu Tong did not waste time. Once she finished eating, she entered seclusion to break through to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Ling Han could only yield the inner chamber to her and move his bed to the outer chamber.

Ling Zhong Kuan and his group felt immeasurable hatred towards Ling Han, but thanks to Liu Yu Tong's presence, they absolutely did not dare have any crazy ideas. Ling Han seldom came out, and only waited quietly for Zhu He Xin to deliver the medicine and for Liu Yu Tong to come out of seclusion, thus making it even more difficult for them to act.

As expected, Zhu He Xin did not go back on his word and, on the fourth day, personally came to deliver the medicinal ingredients requested by Ling Han. Naturally, the old man also took the chance to consult with Ling Han. In truth, he had wanted to come over these few days, but in his eyes, Ling Han was at the level of a supreme grandmaster, so he didn't dare to come and disturb him for no reason.

However, Ling Han did not have much patience today and very quickly saw Zhu He Xin off. He wanted to immediately start concocting, heal his Spirit Base and once again return to the path of cultivation.

To Ling Han, concocting medicine was naturally a piece of cake. After only three minutes, he had finished concocting the Element

Heart Recover Spirit Powder—he did not stay idle these three days; aside from cultivating Indestructible Heaven Scroll, he naturally had completed the preparatory work.

"Concoctions are really too bitter, ai!" Ling Han sighed as he swallowed the Element Heart Recover Spirit Powder completely.

Not long after, a heat-like energy attacked his body, and he suddenly had the feeling that there was some sort of fire burning within his body. Upon examining his Dantian, he saw that the damaged Spirit Base was currently slowly recovering, and would be fully recovered within no more than half a day.

Within this time period, he could not do anything else, so he simply waited patiently.

To someone who had been in "slumber" for ten thousand years, half a day's wait naturally meant little.

Slowly, within Ling Han's Dantian, the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus completely bloomed, very natural and beautiful, too wonderful for words.

Chapter 11: Fourth Layer of Body Refining Tier!

He could finally start cultivating!

Ling Han had been waiting for it for three long days. Add to that the long wait he had experienced for the past ten thousand years, and it was no wonder that he would immediately sit in a cross-legged position to cultivate now that he realized he could finally start cultivating.

However, just as he was about to circulate Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill, he paused for a while, stood up and opened the door to his room, entering the courtyard outside.

Liu Yu Tong was still in seclusion to break through to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier inside the inner chamber. If he started cultivating too close to her, he would disturb the spiritual environment within this small area and affect her cultivation.

See? What a considerate master he was!

Ling Han sat cross-legged in the courtyard. This courtyard belonged to his father, Ling Dong Xing. As the Clan Head of the Ling Clan, the courtyard was naturally very big, but Ling Han had long since dismissed the servants, and would only allow someone to deliver the three meals of the day here.

Come, come, let me see the greatness of an Immortal Grade Spirit Base!

With a mental command from Ling Han, his Spirit Base immediately bloomed like a flower. A lotus of the Dao, the five elements in balance... this was the most perfect form of a Spirit Base!

“Weng!” The spiritual Qi immediately rushed over from all directions, rich beyond compare.

The Five Elements of the world—Gold, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth—and thus five different types of Spiritual Qi rushed frantically into his body, the latter like a thirsty horse drinking from a spring.

Ordinarily, a person had no way to absorb more than one type of Spiritual Qi because it was impossible to simultaneously refine more than one type of it. That's why cultivators usually focused only on one in their cultivation.

For example, someone could have a Spirit Base with a dual alignment of fire and earth, the fire Spirit Base being slightly stronger. It meant that the absorption rate of fire type Spiritual Qi would be higher, so he would only need to focus on refining fire type Spiritual Qi, and would not be able to obtain both it and earth type Spiritual Qi.

However, the wonderful characteristic of the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus was that it could take advantage of the mutual reinforcement and restraint of the Five Elements, and make the [five different types of Spiritual Qi](#) create a perfect balance.

However, absorbing Spiritual Qi was one matter, refining it was another. Only Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill could achieve both.

This cultivation technique was not something just anyone could control. It required high-level multitasking and did not allow any errors or mistakes; otherwise, the Origin Power could enter the wrong pathways. A light consequence of this would be spitting out some fresh blood; the most serious consequence would be instant death.

Immortal Grade Spirit Base, Heaven Grade Skill, an extremely strong control... only with these three factors combined would one possessing the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus Spirit Base be able to cultivate Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill. Being able to satisfy such high requirements... Ling Han's cultivation speed could be

imagined.

Endless Spiritual Qi rushed inwards and Ling Han's body continuously generated Origin Power, refining his blood, flesh, veins and bones.

A martial artist of the Body Refining Tier had not yet opened up his Dantian, and so could only store his Origin Power within his blood, flesh, veins and bones. Only once he stepped into the Element Gathering Tier could he open up his Dantian and form a small world within his body to accommodate his Origin Power there.

In his previous life, he was a strong warrior of the Heaven Tier, so naturally he would not make any wrong turns on the path of cultivation. As he now possessed the greatest Spirit Base in the world and cultivated the best first-rate technique in existence, the speed of his progress was naturally as if he had grown wings and taken flight.

The middle period of the second layer of Body Refining Tier... late period... peak... with only a slight tremble of his body, the hurdle for the third layer of Body Refining Tier was immediately overcome.

So fast!

Ling Han nodded secretly. In his last life, he had a High Level Heaven Grade Spirit Base, but he had still spent twelve days to get from the second layer of Body Refining Tier to the third layer of Body Refining Tier—however, it was not because a High Level Heaven Grade Spirit Base was really poor in comparison to an Immortal Grade Spirit Base, but rather because Ling Han had been cultivating a High Level Yellow Grade cultivation technique at that time.

The present him was as if standing on the shoulder of a giant—there was no way that his last life could compare to the starting point he was at now.

He had no intention of stopping there. He intently and continuously refined the Spiritual Qi from the environment, turning it into his own body's Origin Power.

The early period of the third layer of Body Refining Tier... middle period... late period... peak... within only a few hours' time, he had reached the limit of the third layer and thus of the early stage of the Body Refining Tier.

However, after spending such a long time cultivating, his mental energy was largely depleted. The requirements for controlling Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill were quite high after all.

If he continued cultivating, he could mis-refine his Origin Power at any moment, bringing only harm and no benefit.

Still, he had already reached this level, so no matter what, he wanted to break through to the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier today!

The third layer was still the early stage of Body Refining Tier, while the fourth layer was the middle stage; this was a large leap and not just a simple breakthrough from one layer to another.

For an ordinary person to think of breaking through twice in a short period of time, that was without doubt a complete fantasy. No matter what, to break through would require at least two or three days of accumulating Origin Power. However, Ling Han was a warrior of the Heaven Tier in his last life, so to him, there were no bottlenecks before Heaven Tier.

“Break through!” He snorted lightly, and there was a subtle change within his body; with a slight tremble of his body, he had once again broken through.

‘Fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, now this can finally be shown to others,’ he showed a slight smile. Although this layer of cultivation could not be considered really high amongst those of the same age, to consecutively break through two minor layers

within a single night was still something that gave him great satisfaction.

Moreover, the cultivation technique he was using was a Heaven Grade Skill; his Origin Power was incomparably pure, its quality far higher than that of any other person's. The power of the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier he wielded was enough to compare with the power of someone from the peak period fifth layer of Body Refining Tier, or even the sixth layer!

'Sleep!' He got onto the bed. Due to the large expense of his mental energy, he very quickly fell asleep. However, it was a light sleep as his consciousness was still seventy percent alert, so that he could immediately awaken at the smallest disturbance.

The night passed quickly, and he was shaken awake by a great fluctuation of Origin Power.

He immediately sat upright, revealing a very alert expression, but then immediately realized that it was not an enemy attack, but rather Liu Yu Tong who had broken through!

To break through to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier from the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier in three days, her talent was really quite good. For every tier, the further one got, the harder it was to break through; it was as if one was rowing a boat against the tide.

With a soft sound, the hanging curtain of the doorway opened, and he could see Liu Yu Tong walk out, a strong energy fluctuation present around her body. She had just broken through, and was still unable to control the energy swelling around her body properly.

"I broke through!" She said to Ling Han, and there was delight and pride on her beautiful face.

Three days to completely breach the gap between two layers, moreover the most difficult one between eighth and ninth layer,

this was indeed something to take pride in.

She looked towards Ling Han, hoping to hear a compliment from the other's mouth.

However, her joy and pride very quickly completely vanished. The expression on her face was as if she had just seen a ghost; pointing towards Ling Han, she said, "You, you, you... you, you're already in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier!"

She remembered very clearly that, before her seclusion, Ling Han was only at the second layer of Body Refining Tier; moreover, Zhu He Xin's medicine had only been delivered yesterday morning! Carefully calculating, from the moment his Spirit Base recovered to the moment he broke through to the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, Ling Han had only spent one day and one night!

One day and one night to break through two minor layers, under comparison, what would her spending three days just to break through one layer count as?

Everyone said that the young master of the Ling Clan was a standard piece of trash, but if someone with this kind of progress rate was still considered a piece of trash... then what would she count as? A piece of trash amongst all other trash?

"You, you, you're now in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier!" Even her voice had a slight tremble in it.

...If someone had told her a day ago that she would be shocked because of someone breaking through to fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, she would have replied with nothing but a snort of contempt. However, if they added that that someone spent one day to break through from the second layer of Body Refining Tier to the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, she would definitely find that the biggest joke in the world.

She had once thought that there would be no more miracles from Ling Han, yet she never imagined that she would once again

experience such an earth-shattering shock.

Ling Han nodded, and with a calm tone, he said, “That’s right, what of it?”

‘How can you dismiss it so lightly?’ Liu Yu Tong immediately felt as if she was about to go mad.

The idea about five elements in Chinese philosophy is that each element supports one but also restrains another. So, for example, Wood amplifies (supports) Fire, but Fire is being restrained by Water.

Chapter 12: Father's Return

“Peng, peng, peng, peng!” It was at that very moment that an urgent knocking was heard from the door.

Ling Han walked over and opened the door only to see a boy servant. He had already commanded that, if there was no urgent business, he was not to be disturbed; thus, he asked, “What happened?”

“The Clan Head has returned!” The boy servant hurriedly said.

Excitement instantly rose within Ling Han’s body, pressing him to meet with that man; this was an instinctive reaction of the body.

“Father...” he murmured. He had inherited this body, and had also inherited the blood and responsibility that belonged to this body.

He turned and smiled at Liu Yu Tong, saying, “Yu Tong, come with me to meet my father.”

A red blush immediately flew upon Liu Yu Tong’s beautiful face. She felt as if she was a daughter-in-law going to meet with her parents-in-law. ‘Pei!’ She hurriedly spat in her heart a few times—why would she have this kind of feeling? There was nothing going on between herself and this guy!

“Where is Father?” Ling Han asked the boy servant.

“In the Main Hall.”

Ling Han headed towards the Main Hall, and the pace of his steps increased from walking to running; there was a powerful longing in his heart. The moment he barged into the living hall, he saw a man of about forty years old, standing there proudly. He had a tall, broad figure, a handsome face, and exuded a powerful aura.

At that moment, Ling Han could not longer differentiate whether it was the instinctive reaction of the body, or the fact that he was

an orphan in his last life and so thirsted for familial love. His eyes could not help growing wet, and the blood relation running through his veins caused him to easily call out, “Father!”

“Han’er!” Ling Dong Xing laughed heartily and quickly walked over to embrace Ling Han. However, he immediately put on a shocked expression and said, “Why are you still in the clan residence, aren’t you supposed to have gone to Hu Yang Academy?”

This was fatherly love, this was fatherly love!

Ling Han greedily enjoyed the embrace of his father. Although in his last life, someone with Ling Dong Xing’s cultivation level was not even qualified to enter his eyes, now he was shaken to the point that his eyes were brimming with tears. He had finally cast aside the identity of his last life to enjoy his new life.

He was no longer a loner without any family. He had a father, a good father who would risk his own life for him!

He rubbed at the corners of his eyes, shook his head and said, “I don’t want to go to Hu Yang Academy.”

“Why?” Ling Dong Xing asked. He knew that the quality of his only son’s Spirit Base was too poor. Even though he had expended various efforts, his cultivation still did not make any progress; this was something that could not be helped. And he too had worked very hard to send Ling Han to Hu Yang Academy, which was to make use of the various immeasurable resources on hand at Hu Yang Academy to forcibly raise Ling Han’s cultivation level to Element Gathering Tier. Only with that could he die without regrets.

But Ling Han actually said he did not want to go to Hu Yang Academy! This caused his anger to rise—there was no helping being born with poor talent, but if there was not even a tiny bit of desire to improve oneself, then there really was no cure!

Ling Han naturally couldn't say that he had been a warrior of the Heaven Tier in his last life and there were countless high-level cultivation techniques and martial skills stored within his head, or that he had obtained the Indestructible Heaven Scroll that required him to spend ten thousand years just to comprehend the first layer. Even if he went to Hu Yang Academy, what was he supposed to learn?

If he had really said so, Ling Dong Xing might think that he had been possessed.

"Yu Tong, come, come, come, this is my father," he said as he glanced at Liu Yu Tong, hurriedly beckoning her to come over with a wave of his hands, changing the subject.

"Yu Tong hereby greets Ling Clan's Clan Head!" Liu Yu Tong performed the greeting etiquette of a junior.

Ling Dong Xing was startled; he did not know who Liu Yu Tong was, yet he could tell that she was a martial artist of the Element Gathering Tier just like him, and that her cultivation didn't differ much from his own—both of them were at the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

Most martial artists would be able to tell the cultivation level of those weaker than themselves. Ling Han was an exception—after all, he had brought along the amazing knowledge of a warrior of the Heaven Tier from his past life.

With this being the case, she could completely stand at the same level as he, and there was no need for her to perform the greeting of a junior.

Wait... could it be!

He suddenly looked both joyful and surprised—could it be because of Ling Han? This young girl liked his son? With this thought, he could not restrain his delight; this girl seemed to be only about seventeen or eighteen years old, yet shockingly, she was

already at the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier! Her talent definitely had to be extremely high!

With such an excellent companion, so what if Ling Han's own cultivation level was poorer?

No wonder this brat didn't want to go to Hu Yang Academy, it must be that he did not want to be separated from her. Hei hei, this brat was actually an affectionate character.

"You little brat!" Ling Dong Xing first glared at Ling Han, then said to Liu Yu Tong, "Miss, where are you from?"

"The Liu Clan of the Imperial City," Liu Yu Tong replied.

Ling Dong Xing was shocked. The Liu Clan of the Imperial City? Although there were many in the world with the surname Liu, there was only one Liu Clan in the Imperial City—one of the Eight Great Clans, with power which was only below that of the Imperial Family in the whole of Rain Country.

Such a great background?

"Wait, you should be the one sent from Hu Yang Academy to fetch Han'er to the academy, right?" He suddenly saw a flash of light. Otherwise, how could it be possible someone of the Liu Clan from the Imperial City would appear here.

"Yes, Ling Clan Head," Liu Yu Tong said softly.

Ling Dong Xing could not help looking over at Ling Han, and in his heart thought that although his son was not capable and without talent in martial arts, his ability to pick up girls really took one's breath away. The other was here only to fetch him, so how did he manage to capture the other's heart? Moreover, he only needed several days!

Ling Han had inherited the graceful, charming demeanor of his younger days... yes, it had to be it...

But since Liu Yu Tong was someone from Hu Yang Academy, why

wouldn't Ling Han follow her then? The two of them would both be at the Yang Academy, so there wouldn't be any worry about being in two separate places.

"Father, I would like to be by your side for a while longer. I can go to the Academy anytime later anyway," Ling Han said. He did not want to scare his father, and thus planned to proceed slowly, and let Ling Dong Xing accept the change in him bit by bit.

Ling Dong Xing gave a hearty laugh, and said, "Good, good, good!" After all, the one who would be fetching him was still here, so Ling Han could go to Hu Yang Academy at any time he wanted.

He patted Ling Han's shoulder and was just about to say something more on the topic, but made a shocked expression as he noticed, "Han'er, you've broken through!"

'Finally there is someone to share the shock I have experienced,' Liu Yu Tong thought.

"En, I broke through," Ling Han nodded.

"I have only departed for ten days, and you did not just break through... you actually broke through two layers!" Ling Dong Xing's surprise did not decrease any bit, this kind of progression rate was completely inconceivable!

If Ling Han had only broken through one layer, then it could be explained that Ling Han had been well-prepared, and had been at the same layer for too long a period of time and thus induced a one-time explosion using the accumulated Origin Power. But, two whole layers... this would practically shock others to death!

Was his son really a piece of trash? If this was still considered a piece of trash, then was there still any genius in this world?

Seeing the twitching corners of Ling Dong Xing's mouth, Liu Yu Tong instantly felt comforted in her heart. She didn't want to be the only one to always suffer this kind of great shock.

"En, it's acceptable," Ling Han nodded.

Ling Dong Xing and Liu Yu Tong both rolled their eyes. Only “acceptable”? However, Ling Dong Xing instantly laughed heartily, saying, “Hahaha, let’s see who would dare to say my son is a piece of trash in the future!”

Which father would not want his son to be successful in life? So far, Ling Han could only be a piece of trash due to the limitations of his Spirit Base, yet now Ling Dong Xing felt as if he had seen a spark of hope.

“Father, I obtained a fateful encounter,” Ling Han said.

Ling Dong Xing nodded. If there had been no fateful encounter, how would Ling Han be able to make such quick progress? However, this fateful encounter was indeed extraordinarily large!

The Chinese have a tendency to repeat the same word for emphasis or in emotion several times. The one most common in novels is when some guy is angry so he says “good!” thrice (with the meaning being sth along the lines of, “good job pissing me off”). There are probably some rules regarding what kind of words can be repeated (one of such rules is probably that only short 1-character words can be repeated like that) but I’m not Chinese so I don’t know about it too well.

Chapter 13: Ling Dong Xing's Regret

"Father, I will definitely not disappoint you! I will only make you proud of me!" Ling Han said.

"Good! Good! Good! You truly are my, Ling Dong Xing's, son!" Ling Dong Xing too was excited to the point of shedding tears; although he did not know what kind of fateful encounter Ling Han had obtained, the present him could only feel joyful, excited and delighted! He wanted nothing more than to announce to the whole world that his son, Ling Dong Xing's son, was not a piece of trash!

Liu Yu Tong looked at this scene and, for some reason, the corners of her eyes felt slightly wet.

"Father, I would like to discuss something with you!" Ling Han pulled Ling Dong Xing to a corner of their courtyard, and let Liu Yu Tong go to rest first. There were some words that could only be said to his father and, after all, Liu Yu Tong had not yet obtained his true approval and trust.

"What kind of matter is it for you to be so mysterious about it?" Ling Dong Xing asked with a smile and a bit of curiosity. He was curious what the words that could not even be heard by Liu Yu Tong could be—he naturally thought that Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong were already a couple.

Ling Han said, "Father, let me look at your Spirit Base."

One could actually view the Spirit Base using a special means, but for those in the Element Gathering Tier, they could directly project an image of their Spirit Base without having to resort to any supporting method.

Ling Dong Xing could not help frowning, before saying, "Why?"

"I would like to find a cultivation technique that best suits you, taking into consideration your Spirit Base," Ling Han said.

Ling Dong Xing could not help being secretly speechless, how

many cultivation techniques had this son of his gotten his hands on to actually be able to choose a cultivation technique best suited to the individual according to their type of Spirit Base? If he had not just witnessed Ling Han's miracle, he would not believe his words one bit.

He shook his head, yet did not say a single word.

"Father?" When Ling Han looked at Ling Dong Xing, he realized there seemed to be some kind of hidden story.

Ling Dong Xing exhaled a sigh and said, "No matter what the cultivation technique is, it's useless. My Spirit Base is already destroyed."

"What!" Ling Han called softly, but very soon, an enraged expression slipped onto his face, "Who did it?"

Ling Dong Xing was a warrior of the Element Gathering Tier, so there was no way that his Spirit Base had been disabled from the start. Thus, the logical conclusion was that it had been crippled by someone else.

Ling Han was someone who would cover the shortcomings of his own people, moreover this was his own father, so naturally he would be seething in anger.

"This matter.... is related to your mother," Ling Dong Xing sighed, and his face revealed a flash of tenderness, though there also seemed to be remorse and wrath mixed with it. To put it shortly, it was an extremely complicated expression.

"Mother?" Ling Han murmured. According to this body's memories, Ling Dong Xing had never once mentioned anything about his mother to him. Every time he asked about his mother, Ling Dong Xing would immediately change the subject. The only thing he knew was that, not long after his birth, his mother had passed away.

"In the past, I thought that the issue about your mother would

forever be buried within the depths of my heart, but now—" Ling Dong Xing paused. "Han'er, if you can achieve Element Gathering Tier within three years' time, then I shall tell you about your mother."

'...She, she's not dead!'

A powerful excitement rose up within Ling Han's heart. The heavens were truly generous to him, not only gifting him with fatherly love, but also gifting him with the chance to obtain motherly love as well! He laughed heartily, and said, "How difficult would that be? I don't need three years, I will be able to break through to Element Gathering Tier within three months' time!"

Ling Dong Xing was shaken. Three months to break through from the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier to Element Gathering Tier? Was this possible? Even for him, who had once been acclaimed as the greatest genius of Gray Cloud Town, it had taken a whole two years' time to make such a gigantic leap.

But once he recalled that Ling Han had broken through two layers within a mere seven days... to break through to Element Gathering Tier within three months didn't look all that impossible.

He was startled for a moment, before he said, "Very well, if you can break through to Element Gathering Tier within three months, then I shall tell you everything, and you will be the one to go and rescue your mother!"

Rescue? This meant that his mother was currently confined in some place. No wonder Ling Dong Xing had always deceived him by saying his mother had passed away, so it had been a white lie!

Ling Han nodded, but he still said with a smile, "Doesn't Father want to rescue Mother with your own hands?"

Ling Dong Xing's fierce eyes widened, and he showed an excited

expression, yet very quickly calmed down again. He said, “My Spirit Base is already destroyed, I have to take Return Origin Pills just to recover Origin Power; there is no way for me to advance forward! And to save your mother would require at least the cultivation level of Flower Blossom Tier.”

Aside from the legendary Shattering Void Tier, there were in total nine tiers in martial arts, which were respectively Body Refining, Element Gathering, Gushing Spring, Spiritual Ocean, Spiritual Pedestal, Flower Blossom, Spiritual Infant, Deity Transformation and Heaven Tiers.

Flower Blossom Tier—the sixth tier. What kind of concept was this?

The strongest warrior of the Eight Great Clans of Rain Country was only of the Spiritual Pedestal Tier, and according to the rumors, the Imperial Clan possessed extremely powerful warriors of the Flower Blossom Tier to keep watch over the central administration, which was what kept the Eight Great Clans in check, ensuring they have no thoughts of trying anything funny.

Someone who had reached the cultivation of the Flower Blossom Tier would be able to start their own country to hand down to their descendants!

However, to Ling Han who had once been a warrior of the Heaven Tier, so what if it was the Flower Blossom Tier? And in this new life, all of his starting conditions were even more outstanding—Immortal Grade Spirit Base, Indestructible Heaven Scroll... moreover, he had already passed through all nine tiers of martial arts once, so there was no way he would encounter any kind of bottleneck, and his excellent alchemist skills would be able to provide him with all kinds of alchemical pills and medicines.

Thirty years, at most, fifty years, and he would be able to once again return to the pinnacle!

Ling Han laughed and said, “Father, the Spirit Base is a part of

the body, there is no such thing as being unable to heal the Spirit Base, just let me take a look.”

Ling Dong Xing stared at Ling Han for a while before he finally nodded, and said, “Very well!” He raised both arms as if he were holding something and, with a mental command, he projected the Spirit Base in his Dantian into open view.

Ling Han was slightly shocked—Ling Dong Xing’s Spirit Base was surprisingly the low level Heaven Grade “Broken Edge Sword”, of the gold alignment. No wonder that even though Ling Dong Xing had long had his Spirit Base crippled, he was still in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. That was because the speed of his cultivation was very quick, and he had long since achieved this kind of cultivation level.

However, currently this Broken Edge Sword had long lost its blade, and only a bit of the sword hilt was left behind. There was no possible way that it could continue to absorb Spiritual Qi, so it was practically completely destroyed.

The destruction of the Spirit Base meant that it was no longer possible for the owner’s martial arts to improve further.

However, making it recover was of no difficulty to Ling Han.

He said, “Father, your Spirit Base can still be healed, but I currently do not have the necessary medicinal ingredients on hand, so I need some time.”

There really was hope?

Ling Dong Xing could not help it as his hands tightened into fists. If he could, he would of course want to personally save his wife from her abyss of suffering, but because his Spirit Base had been destroyed, he could only place his hopes on his son.

In the past, when Ling Han’s Spirit Base was awakened, and yet it was revealed to be the Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base, Ling Dong Xing felt unbearably disappointed and painful. From that

moment, he gave up his hopes and deceived Ling Han by saying his mother had already died, shouldering all the pain and longing by himself.

“Han’er, is what you’re saying the truth?” He asked in a trembling voice.

“Of course it’s the truth,” Ling Han replied solemnly. “Give me three years, no, two years’ time, and I will definitely find the medicinal ingredients for Father and create an alchemical pill to heal Father’s Spirit Base.”

Ling Dong Xing said generously, “Very well, then at that time, the two of us, father and son, will join forces to save your mother and reunite our family!”

“En!” Ling Han nodded.

“However, you will still have to obediently go to Hu Yang Academy for me!” Ling Dong Xing suddenly switched the topic.

Ling Han could not help feeling a little depressed—he had already displayed such excellent talents, so why did his old man still not believe him, and compel him to go to Hu Yang Academy? However, his father’s doing was all for his sake, and was well-meant.

Since his father wanted him to go so much, then he’d just go. It didn’t matter where he cultivated anyway. Moreover, Grey Cloud Town was too small, and could not possibly supply the cultivation resources he required anyway.

Chapter 14: Predecessor's Obsession

Ling Han revealed the despicable deeds done by Ling Zhong Kuan, his sons and his grandson to Ling Dong Xing. That group of people obviously would not be giving up just like this and they'd definitely try to do something, so Ling Dong Xing needed to be prepared for it.

"I understand!" Ling Dong Xing seemed extremely confident. He had been openly competing with Ling Zhong Kuan for many years, yet Ling Zhong Kuan could only remain as the Chief Butler, completely suppressed by him.

Years ago, Ling Dong Xing also used to be a favored, proud genius, an all-powerful existence within the clan. If it was not for the destruction of his Spirit Base, someone like Ling Zhong Kuan would be nothing in his eyes.

"Heng, he dared to bully my son! If I don't beat him to the point that he has to be bedridden for a month, then my surname isn't Ling!" He said ruthlessly, eyes cold.

'So my old man is also someone who would cover for his own people!' Those words were very much to Ling Han's liking.

Ling Han spoke with his father for a moment longer before leaving.

As the head of a large clan, Ling Dong Xing naturally had many matters to deal with. Moreover, he still had to go and thrash Ling Zhong Kuan, that old dog who dared to take advantage of his absence to bully his son.

Ling Han had no interest to see that old dog being helplessly and mercilessly thrashed by Ling Dong Xing. He returned to his room to start considering the direction he should take in the future.

Cultivation would definitely require the support of alchemical pills, and the reason he had reached Heaven Tier in a mere two

hundred years in his last life was because he himself was a genius alchemist. However, even a clever housewife cannot cook a meal without rice; although he now had in his hands all kinds of knowledge about alchemy, he still needed the ingredients for concocting pills.

And the higher the grade of the alchemical pill, the more priceless and valuable the ingredients needed would be. Actually, if someone were to compare the Ling Clan's wealth with the cost of these ingredients... the results could be summed up with only one word: poor!

He had to do something. Otherwise, the speed of his cultivation would definitely be unable to achieve the expected standard.

To put it simply, he had to earn money. Ling Han currently managed to think of two ways.

Firstly, sale of cultivation techniques and martial arts skills. In his last life, he had accumulated a staggering number of top-rate secret arts; should he take any one of them to an auction, he'd definitely earn an astronomical wealth. However, this was not appropriate.

Because, the current Ling Han was simply much too weak.

If he still had the cultivation level of Heaven Tier, then even if he released a Heaven Grade cultivation technique, others naturally would not dare to have any evil ideas. However, if he did something like that now, he would only become a target for others to force him to hand over even more cultivation techniques.

If he really did have to sell any cultivation techniques or martial arts skills, he could only sell those that were not too far from his current martial arts skill level. Moreover, he couldn't sell too many at a time.

Then that left only the second method, which was to sell alchemical pills.

This was his original profession. Besides, alchemy was a very respected profession. Whoever dared to disrespect an alchemist could easily cause public outrage, so there would definitely be serious consideration before anyone attempted such an idiotic thing.

Within the current Rain Country, at least eighty percent of the country's alchemists were involved with the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, while the remaining twenty percent were esteemed guests of the various great clans and factions. The alchemical pills concocted by them would thus only be used by members of these great powers, without any possibility of them being sold in public.

Lastly, there were a few alchemists who were loners, and were not working for any kind of power. If they lacked money, they would simply concoct alchemical pills for sale. Thus, they were completely free from any obligations.

For example, in Grey Cloud Town, the supply of high-grade alchemical pills and medicines would only be found in the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, so those who wanted to buy them could only choose to go there. Low-grade alchemical pills would be distributed for sale in batches by Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, offered to the two Great Clans in the town. Thus, there would be mutual benefit for both the two Great Clans and the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. After all, the two Great Clans were very influential in the area.

The two Great Clans referred to Ling Clan and Cheng Clan. Both clans would be able to obtain fifty percent of the total low-grade alchemical pills from the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion respectively.

However, although the two Great Clans only obtained very little profit when compared to the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, in terms of alchemical pills, they could be said to have gained an overwhelming profit.

Alchemy was an extremely high-paying profession—this was also

one of the reasons why alchemists would be regarded as esteemed guests by the various great powers. If the various clans and factions did not have their own alchemists, then their purchase of alchemical pills and medicines would incur a horrifyingly astronomical expense.

In this life, Ling Han did not plan to exert too much effort in the path of alchemy. Thus, he only wanted to become a lone alchemist. If he lacked money, then he would concoct a few pills—it was enough as long as he had sufficient funds at his disposal.

‘Then it’s decided, I’ll use alchemy as a support for my martial arts.’

However, now that Ling Dong Xing had returned, Ling Han’s freedom was also restricted. His old man was rushing him to immediately go to the academy.

Naturally not Hu Yang Academy, but Grey Cloud Academy.

Hu Yang Academy was established by the imperial clan of Rain Country, and while Grey Cloud Academy was also established by the government, there was no way to compare the two academies’ resources. After all, the disparity was simply too large. However, Ling Dong Xing still had hopes that Ling Han could become an overnight celebrity in Grey Cloud Academy. All fathers naturally wanted their sons to excel and become successful people.

Ling Han naturally would not want to disappoint his father, so he could only agree to go to the academy. He didn’t have much to do anyway, so he’d just go to the academy for a few days and show off a bit to satisfy his father’s ambition. This way, Ling Dong Xing wouldn’t see any need to restrict him further.

Moreover, he also wanted to realize his predecessor’s long-cherished wish and clear his reputation of being a piece of trash.

When he departed, Liu Yu Tong naturally was beside him, and the both of them arrived at Grey Cloud Academy. However, it was

not very appropriate for Liu Yu Tong to accompany him even during classes, so she could only walk around in the academy. Her prowess also meant that she had no fear of anyone trying anything funny with her because of her extreme beauty.

Ling Han walked slowly. It was not a must for him to attend classes. It was more than enough to just come to the academy. The reason why he was here was only out of respect for his father; he would not blindly obey Ling Dong Xing's every single word.

Just as he came to the Martial Training Court, he could not help but pause in his steps as a strong pounding rose up within his body, causing him to, for some reason, turn and head in the direction of the Martial Training Court.

This was an obsession originating from his predecessor.

His predecessor had in total two matters that he could not let go of. The first was naturally his father, and the second was a woman within this Grey Cloud Academy. If he had not come, it would not have affected him, but now that he was here, this obsession immediately became incomparably heavy.

His predecessor had once liked a woman by the name of Shen Zi Yan. She was a student of Grey Cloud Academy, and the entanglement between the two of them was an extremely complicated one.

Seven years ago, when Shen Zi Yan was just a little girl at the age of ten, she had already displayed a surprising beauty. Ling Dong Xing acted quickly and arranged an engagement contract between her and Ling Han.

Because the Ling Clan was one of the two Great Clans in town and Ling Han was the son of the clan's Clan Head, the Shen Clan naturally had no objection and gladly agreed to this match.

However, when Ling Han was twelve, through examination, his Spirit Base was confirmed to be Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base.

If it was just this, then according to the power of the Ling Clan, the Shen Clan would still not dare to have any wild thoughts. The problem was that Shen Zi Yan had a high level Earth Grade Spirit Base!

Moreover, Shen Zi Yan was also extremely gifted in martial arts, so she managed to live up to such an excellent Spirit Base. As her cultivation level soared, she was regarded as a treasure by the higher-ups of the academy, who always meant to send her to Hu Yang Academy because they believed that only there would her talent truly blossom.

As the two of them grew up, and the gap between Shen Zi Yan and Ling Han's cultivation levels widened ever further, she finally requested the Ling Clan to break the engagement contract.

Ling Dong Xing naturally did not want to agree. This would not only be a blow to the pride of the Ling Clan, but would also break his son's heart. Yet his predecessor agreed, because his affection for his woman was bone-deep.

Although they were now no more than strangers, his predecessor was still very much in love with the girl and kept on secretly paying attention to her all this while.

The strength of his affection was so big that, even though his predecessor had already died, the body's instinctive reaction was to follow it, affecting the current Ling Han.

'I need to get rid of this obsession... otherwise, in the future, this may become my inner demon and affect my progress,' Ling Han thought. As someone who used to be a warrior of the Heaven Tier, he naturally knew the danger an inner demon represented. 'Then I'll go to see her once more. After this, there will no longer be any relation between the two of us!' Ling Han thought, as if negotiating with his predecessor.

Chapter 15: Kneel

Ling Han walked into the Martial Training Court and saw a beautiful young girl practicing martial arts skills in the center. She was wearing a white warrior dress and her movements were as graceful as a deity's. Around her was a number of young men and women who had gathered to watch. The young women's gazes were heated whilst the men wore intoxicated expressions as they observed her practice.

That young girl was Shen Zi Yan. Everyday, she would be cultivating in this location.

She truly was very beautiful, but when compared to Liu Yu Tong, her beauty fell short. Moreover, Ling Han had long been used to seeing remarkably stunning beauties in his last life, so naturally he was not moved.

His predecessor was a hopeless romantic. However, now that he was dead, the one in charge was he who had once been a warrior of the Heaven Tier!

Ling Han took a deep breath. He felt the last remnants of his predecessor's obsessive feelings vanish into thin air. Now he was finally the one and only owner of this body.

His predecessor had two things he could not let go of. One was his father, and the other was Shen Zi Yan. Now that these two obsessions have been completely neutralized, the predecessor could finally and completely "depart", and no longer have the slightest bit of effect over this body.

In truth, his predecessor knew very well that he and Shen Zi Yan could never be, so he had only meant to secretly admire her from afar. Otherwise, if this obsession was something like wanting to marry her and no one else, Ling Han would be in big trouble.

"Get out of here!" It was at this moment that Shen Zi Yan

stopped her movements and shouted these words coldly at him.

How overbearing, did she think that her family owned the Martial Training Court?

Naturally, Ling Han didn't want to even bother with this kind of condescending, arrogant girl who thought the whole world revolved around her. After all, the obsession had vanished, and in his opinion, Shen Zi Yan simply could not be considered incomparably beautiful, nor was she shockingly talented. She really didn't even have the qualifications for him to consider her for one moment longer.

For the sake of his predecessor, he did not react to her insulting words, and turned away, intending to leave.

"Stop right there!" A young man dressed in embroidered clothing sprang out and, with a few steps, rushed in front of Ling Han, blocking his way. He said, "Didn't you hear Younger Sister Disciple Shen's words? She told you to roll out of here. You don't use your legs to roll."

His name was Cheng Hao, and he was the second son of the Clan Head of the other Great Clan in Grey Cloud Town. He was also one of Shen Zi Yan's admirers. However, Shen Zi Yan had never treated him any differently from the others. Now, he had finally found an opportunity to show off in front of her—teach Ling Han a hard lesson in order to obtain Shen Zi Yan's favor.

Moreover, this was not the first time he had bullied Ling Han, because among the people he could bully, Ling Han's status was the highest and thus bullying him gave him the most satisfaction.

Ling Han's eyes automatically turned severe. The images of his predecessor being bullied by Cheng Hao played vividly before his eyes. Originally, he would not have bothered had Cheng Hao remained a simple face in the crowd, but now that he had spotted Cheng Hao, even if the latter had not provoked him in this manner, he had no plans of letting matters rest.

“Are you looking to die?” He said in a murderous voice.

“Hahahaha, Ling trash, are you threatening me?” Cheng Hao gave a laugh, yet very quickly his gaze turned severe, “We haven’t seen each other for just a few days, and now you’ve grown so brave that you actually dare to talk back to me?”

Everyone in the area started laughing. Ling Han’s identity as a piece of trash was well-known throughout the whole academy, so these words naturally seemed like the greatest joke in the world to them.

Ling Han smiled coldly and walked towards Cheng Hao.

“What is it now, are you going to beg me to spare you? If you’re going to beg, then make sure you speak loudly enough,” Cheng Hao said nonchalantly.

“Pa!”

It was at this moment that a sharp, crisp slap was heard, causing everyone’s laughter to suddenly stop.

Cheng Hao covered his face with one hand; his face expressed his utter disbelief. Just now, he had actually been given a slap by Ling Han... given a slap by a piece of trash!

How great a humiliation was this?!

He immediately entered berserk mode, and blue veins popped up all over his forehead as he said thickly, “Are you tired of living that you actually dare to hit me?”

“I can’t hit you?” Ling Han said calmly. His predecessor had been bullied by Cheng Hao numerous times. He was only getting back a little interest now.

“How dare you!” Cheng Hao never thought that Ling Han would not only not beg for his life out of panic, but actually dared to talk back to him. He was originally already extremely furious, so how could he hold himself back now. He immediately raised his hand

which flew towards Ling Han.

The current Ling Han was in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier. Even though that was still two layers lower than Cheng Hao, they were both in the middle stage of Body Refining Tier. With Ling Han's battle experience as someone who had once wielded the power of the Heaven Tier, how could he possibly lose?

"Pa!" Cheng Hao had just raised his hand, but Ling Han had already reacted accordingly and his right hand flew out. Although he acted later, he reached his target earlier and, once again, another solid slap landed on Cheng Hao's face. With the great strength behind this slap, Cheng Hao staggered, causing the hand he raised to only hit empty air.

"Trash!" Ling Han said in a calm tone, shaking his head.

Everyone was silent. This label of "trash" originally belonged to Ling Han, but now no one could find it in themselves to laugh, for Cheng Hao had indeed been slapped twice.

If the first time could be considered to be the fault of Cheng Hao's carelessness, then the second time could only be Ling Han's display of ability.

But how was this possible? Wasn't Ling Han the publicly acclaimed biggest piece of trash in the whole academy?

Meanwhile, Cheng Hao had been enraged to the point that both his eyes had turned red. With a great roar, he threw himself at Ling Han.

However, the difference between himself and Ling Han was much too large.

"Pa! Pa! Pa! Pa!"

No matter how he attacked, Ling Han somehow managed to act later yet hit first, each slap causing him to stumble; his attack power naturally subsided by itself.

“I see now, Ling Han’s power is actually not as strong as Cheng Hao’s, it seems to be only somewhere around fourth or fifth layer of Body Refining Tier. However, his sixth sense is too terrifying. Every time Cheng Hao makes a move, it’s as if he already knew where Cheng Hao would attack, and make the necessary adjustments in advance.”

“Fourth or fifth layer of Body Refining Tier? That can’t be, he has the Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base, so even if he wants to break through to the middle stage of the Body Refining Tier, he would only be able to achieve that at least after he’s twenty.”

“No matter what his cultivation level is, just his skill in reading attacks is scary enough!”

After watching for a period of time, the students in the area too discovered this “secret”. The “secret” was actually something very simple—Ling Han would predict all of Cheng Hao’s attacks and react accordingly in advance to compensate for the gap between their cultivation levels.

Meanwhile, Cheng Hao was completely slapped silly. There was a persistent buzzing in his head and his face was scarlet and swollen, turning it into a pig’s head. Only the fury he felt kept on supporting his continuous attacks, but all of it was pointless effort.

He was finally scared, and no longer dared to make any move.

But how could Ling Han just let matters go like this?

“Pa! Pa! Pa! Pa!”

He kept up a furious litany of slaps, and Cheng Hao’s lip very quickly was split. Fresh blood was spilled, and he looked extremely pitiful.

At this moment, no one dared to step up and intervene.

“I surrender this time, don’t hit me anymore,” Cheng Hao pleaded.

However, Ling Han did not stop his movements. In the past, when Cheng Hao bullied his predecessor, when had he ever been merciful? He thrashed him for a moment longer, before he said, “Kneel!”

What?!

Cheng Hao felt this was utterly absurd, this trash actually dared tell him to kneel? If he really knelt, then not only would his pride be completely shattered, even the Cheng Clan would be laughed at by others. After all, he was the second son of the Cheng Clan’s Clan Head!

This was too much, even when he and his older brother had bullied Ling Han in the past, they had only dared to thrash the other until his whole body was covered with injuries. They had not dared to make the other kneel down.

This could possibly spark off a blood feud between the two clans!

Chapter 16: Crawl out of here!

“Ling Han, don’t go too far!” Cheng Hao raised his head and said. He could not and would not yield on this matter.

Ling Han laughed thickly and said, “And here I was afraid you might yield and cause me to have no more reason to kill you!”

‘This, this, this, this guy wants to kill me?’

Cheng Hao’s whole body shivered. He looked at Ling Han only to see a harsh expression on his face. He was obviously not joking. He couldn’t control the trembling of his body and said, “Do you want to induce a blood feud between the two Great Clans? Do you want to become the greatest sinner in the history of the Ling Clan?”

“A tiny little Cheng Clan, and you think you’re worthy of flopping around in front of me?” Ling Han said disdainfully, “If your Cheng Clan dare to make a move, I will eliminate the whole lot of you!”

Boom, everyone in the surrounding area erupted with voices.

What big words! The Ling and the Cheng were both powerful clans in Gray Cloud Town; their strength was fairly equal, and should there be a dispute between the two, neither side would win and would only come off worse. As a result, although the two clans both had the desire to get rid of the other and thus gain sole authority over Gray Cloud Town, neither dared to make the first move.

Ling Han, this trash, actually said that he would single-handedly eliminate the Cheng Clan, was he joking?

However, looking at the fierce look on Ling Han’s face at the moment, his whole body exuding an indescribable might, for some reason, it caused everyone in the area to become speechless. They all had the same feeling, and that was the young man in front of them at this moment was no longer the so-called trash they knew.

There were even some girls whose gazes had grown bright. How manly, their knees actually felt a little weak.

“How boastful of you, there isn’t need for anyone else, my older brother alone would be able to single-handedly suppress you!” Cheng Hao shouted, his whole expression filled with obstinate defiance.

In his eyes, Ling Han was only a toy that had been bullied numerous times by him and his older brother, Cheng Xiang. Now that Ling Han had turned the tables on him to suppress him, this was something that he could not accept in any way or manner.

“Pa!”

Ling Han gave him another slap, and asked in an awe-inspiring tone, “So you really want to die then?”

If the Cheng Clan intended to make any kind of retaliation against him, he would not mind eliminating the Cheng Clan using this opportunity—considering Zhu He Xin’s respect towards him, having him take action naturally would only be a small issue. And while Zhu He Xin was no genius in martial arts, he at least had the cultivation of the Gushing Spring Tier. It would be a piece of cake for him to eliminate the Cheng Clan.

So should the Cheng Clan want to bring about their own destruction so desperately, he would not mind using Zhu He Xin to get rid of them.

Cheng Hao could not help himself as cold sweat rolled down his face. In front of Ling Han, he felt an incomparable pressure, and also felt the threat of imminent death. This young man in front of him was no longer the Ling Han of the past, whom he had bullied numerous times... he was now a terrifying God of Death!

“Pa!” He could not help the weakening of his legs as he knelt on the ground. Faced with the choice between his life and his pride, he would cast away his pride without any second thought.

After all, once you die, everything is over.

He really knelt down!

The whole area was in an uproar. Cheng Hao was the Second Young Master of the Cheng Clan, and could to a large degree represent the entire Cheng Clan—someone like that had actually knelt down! Moreover, the one he was kneeling down in front of was a member of the clan which was Cheng Clan’s enemy! This could practically be engraved on the Cheng Clan’s plaque of dishonor!

So Cheng Hao was actually someone who would bully the weak but tremble before the strong... why did no one realize his cowardly character in the past? Everyone wanted to know the answer...

But after thinking it over, this was quite normal. After all, Cheng Hao had always been in the spotlight as the Second Young Master of the Cheng Clan, who would dare oppose him? Thus, of course it would be impossible for anyone to find out that, underneath his overbearing, arrogant exterior, he was actually a big coward!

But Ling Han really was too overbearing, he had actually forced the Second Young Master of the Cheng Clan to kneel down, wasn’t he afraid of provoking a great war between the two clans?

“So cool!” The numerous girls that were already infatuated and lovestruck because of Ling Han’s previous actions shrieked loudly.

“Ling Han, have you done enough!” Cheng Hao said with gritted teeth. There was only one thought in his head at this moment, and that was to leave this location, then come charging back with his older brother, regaining his lost pride and avenging the dishonor and insult he had suffered.

“Crawl out of here!” Ling Han said calmly.

“What!” Cheng Hao thought that he had heard wrongly.

“Pa!” Ling Han gave a kick to Cheng Hao’s back, forcing him to

hold himself up with both hands on the ground.

“Ling Han, you dare insult me in this way, I want to kill you! Kill you!” Cheng Hao was about to go mad. Kneeling down was already the greatest insult he could imagine, but if he also had to actually drop onto the ground like this? And actually crawl out of here?

“So what if I insult you? Trash!” Ling Han said coldly. Haven’t the Cheng brothers insulted him enough in the past?

The reason why the Cheng brothers dared to act that way was because they were stronger than his predecessor, and the adults definitely could not interfere in this kind of dispute amongst the younger generation—at least as long as there was no death or permanent injury. Otherwise, they would be laughed at by others.

“You either crawl out of here, or you die here, make your choice,” Ling Han said.

So domineering, was this really the Ling Han they knew?

Everyone was struck dumb and speechless. In the past, they had all laughed at Ling Han for being a piece of trash, but what kind of trash would actually dare to force the second son of the Cheng Clan to kneel down and crawl like a dog in public?

He was freaking awesome!

Cheng Hao was sweating like crazy. He had no desire to become a sinner of the clan, and even more didn’t want to be shamed in public. However, facing the possibility of death, his willpower was simply too weak. Very quickly, he moved his hands, starting to crawl on the ground.

“Hahahaha!” Everyone around them started laughing. Suddenly it was as if the laughter was contagious, causing even more people to start following their lead and laugh.

The Second Young Master of the Cheng Clan crawling around like a dog, this was not something that could be seen every day!

Cheng Hao's tears gushed out instantly, he gripped his fists tightly, and swore in his heart, that he would definitely kill Ling Han! Definitely! He crawled for more than ten steps, then immediately pushed up from the ground, and rushed out of the Martial Training Court.

He wanted to find his older brother, Cheng Xiang, and kill Ling Han! Kill! Kill! Kill!

“Pa, pa, pa!” Applause rose up and attracted everyone’s attention. Everyone fell silent and looked towards the slender, beautiful girl who just clapped her hands.

Shen Zi Yan stopped clapping, and said, “I have to admit, this was a very exciting performance. However, do you think you can move me with something like this? You’re deluding yourself, don’t think I don’t know what your intentions are. Unfortunately, the gap between you and I is far too wide; you can’t even compare to my little finger, to be liked by someone like you is a complete insult to myself!”

“You think too highly of yourself! Idiot!” Ling Han shook his head. For the sake of his predecessor, he did not want to bother with his foolish girl.

“With my talent in martial arts, I will definitely be famous in future, and create miracles even though I am a girl!” Shen Zi Yan said loftily. “You do not have to say anything anymore, I know that everything you have done was to attract my interest, but very unfortunately, I will never look at a small character like you! Everything between us has long ended!

I don’t mind telling you, I’ve already obtained the invitation to Hu Yang Academy, and will officially become a disciple of Hu Yang Academy next year!

You, a mere piece of trash, actually dare to like me? You are not qualified! Not qualified! Not qualified!”

Fine, she can say everything she wants.

Liking her.... en, that was the natural course of events. She was beautiful and extremely gifted in martial arts, so she must definitely be admired. If you say you don't like her, damn, then you must be deliberately saying contrary words to attract her attention.

To be narcissistic to this point, she was definitely a weirdo.

Even Ling Han was struck speechless. Usually when he's faced with this kind of shameless person, he would directly give a good, solid slap.

Ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, a bit challenging, but not impossible.

Ling Han's eyes grew cold, and he was just about to walk over when his eyes fell upon a beautiful figure walking slowly into the Martial Training Court.

Liu Yu Tong!

She was an extraordinarily beautiful woman who would become the focus of everything wherever she went. Very quickly, everyone's attention was attracted by her beautiful figure. Suddenly, everyone put on a stunned expression—she was so beautiful!

Shen Zi Yan was indeed a beautiful girl, but when compared with this person, she fell short. Moreover, this girl had an indescribably graceful bearing, as if she was a noble princess. In comparison, Shen Zi Yan's so-called beauty was overshadowed to the point she looked like a village girl.

At this moment, there was only one thought in everyone's heart —who was she?

Was she a goddess come down from the heavens? How could her beauty be so cool and elegant? Those who dared to have any thoughts about her felt like they were committing blasphemy.

Under everyone's dumbstruck stares, Liu Yu Tong had already passed Ling Han by and, without a single pause, continued walking forwards.

This was natural, if Liu Yu Tong had actually stopped, they would have been even more shocked—a mere piece of trash, how could he possibly have any relation to this cool and elegant goddess?

Shen Zi Yan felt great pressure. The other's beauty caused even her to feel her own inferiority in comparison, causing her to go mad with jealousy.

The other was not just a little bit more beautiful than her. In all the categories: looks, figure and demeanor, she was completely overwhelmed, so no matter how much she didn't want to admit it, she could only grit her teeth in secret.

Liu Yu Tong stopped in front of Shen Zi Yan, and with a wave of her hand, a slap sounded against the other's face.

“Pa!” Crisp, loud and clear.

“You-” Shen Zi Yan was slapped stupid, but she immediately flared up in fury. With a wave of her right hand, a similar slap flew towards Liu Yu Tong.

But what could the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier do against the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier?

“Pa!” Liu Yu Tong’s hand once again rose and flew down, and another solid slap resounded against Shen Zi Yan’s face a second time.

With these two slaps, Shen Zi Yan’s beautiful hair was messed up, her beautiful face swollen, and she looked a little poignant, but her eyes were filled with fury and poison, as if she wanted to devour someone. She gave a sharp scream and once again, attacked Liu Yu Tong.

But this was obviously pointless effort.

“Pa, pa, pa!”

She was repeatedly slapped, as if she was a doll without any ability of retaliation.

Everyone gasped, these two girls seemed to be about the same age, so why was the difference in ability between them so wide? Who on earth was this icy beauty, and why was she, for some reason, slapping Shen Zi Yan?

“What right do you have to be proud?” Liu Yu Tong asked coldly.

Chapter 17: Cheng Xiang Has Arrived

"You think you're a martial arts genius?" Liu Yu Tong said coldly. "I am seventeen years old this year just like you, but I am already in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. What about you?"

"Pu!"

These words caused everyone to gasp in astonishment.

The ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier... what kind of concept was that?

Only the strongest of the strong in Gray Cloud Town had this kind of cultivation level!

Shen Zi Yan was indeed a genius. Those who had achieved the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier at the age of seventeen were definitely an uncommon existence in the history of Gray Cloud Town. On average, there would only be two or three of such geniuses every one hundred years, and each one of them demonstrated extraordinary talent in their lifetime, going on to become famous and leave their mark in the history of Rain Country.

But when compared with Liu Yu Tong, Shen Zi Yan couldn't even hold a candle to the former!

A seventeen-year-old managed to achieve the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier... even in the vast territory of Rain Country, how many such geniuses would appear in one hundred years?

Liu Yu Tong no longer suppressed her power, and released the majestic aura of a warrior in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. In an instant, everyone in the surrounding area could sense the strength hidden within her body.

Shen Zi Yan bore the brunt of it as the one closest to Liu Yu Tong. Underneath this powerful aura, she abruptly lowered her head.

She wasn't even qualified to look directly at Liu Yu Tong. This was unacceptable to the arrogant Shen Zi Yan, and as she struggled to raise her head to look directly at her opponent, her eyes were filled with fear, despair and confusion.

Why was there suddenly an appearance of someone her own age, but with both beauty and brilliant talent that even she had no choice but to admit her inferiority? Furthermore, why had such a person given her a slap out of the blue?

"How dare you look down on him!" Liu Yu Tong spoke, turning to point at Ling Han, and once more turned to look at Shen Zi Yan, "You're completely unqualified!"

What, she was here to defend Ling Han?

Whether it was Shen Zi Yan or everyone else, they were all in a state of complete disbelief.

This girl with elegant and noble bearing, unparalleled beauty and shocking talent in martial arts was actually acquainted with Trash Ling? Being acquainted with each other was inconceivable enough, and yet she had actually defended Ling Han! How could anyone accept this?

Especially the guys in the area, they all felt like they were about to die of jealousy!

Shen Zi Yan gritted her teeth, her eyes spitting fire. She had now transferred all her fury onto Ling Han.

That was because Liu Yu Tong was too strong, and she dared not have even the slightest thought of revenge.

However, Ling Han was a different story. With his cultivation level at the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, in her eyes, he could be finished off in a single blow.

Moreover, everything was because of Ling Han. He had deliberately made fun of her, so she spoke to him in mockery. As a result, she was publicly slapped by Liu Yu Tong, and had disgraced

herself.

However, in truth, had she not insulted Ling Han in the first place, he would have long left. Then the subsequent course of events would never have happened.

But with her self-centered personality, how could she possibly reflect on her own behavior? So naturally she would push all the fault onto another person's shoulders.

She pointed at Ling Han, and spoke shrilly, "In what way am I not qualified? Isn't this guy just a piece of trash?

Trash?

Have you seen a piece of trash that could break through two layers within a single night? And what kind of trash would cause a Black Grade alchemist to beg just to be able to follow by his side?

Naturally Liu Yu Tong did not intend to inform Shen Zi Yan about any of this, so she only said, "Such a short-sighted woman like yourself naturally cannot see that underneath the dust lies gold, underneath the darkness hides a pearl. You have already missed out on your chance, so there's no point in pointing out his brightness to you."

As she spoke, Liu Yu Tong felt a little irritated—Ling Han had actually admired a woman like this!

Of course, she would never admit that she was jealous.

"Hahahaha!" Shen Zi Yan laughed loudly before pointing at Ling Han and said, "He's gold, he's a pearl? What kind of joke are you playing! He's nothing more but a piece of trash, a complete, utter piece of trash!"

"In less than three months, he will become someone that all of you would only be able to look up to!" Liu Yu Tong said assuredly. She did not know why Ling Han had kept such a low profile in the past, but now he was obviously going to display his brilliance, dazzling to the point that the sun would look pale in comparison.

Hearing these words, everyone sneered. Although Ling Han had truly defeated Cheng Hao, but his actual cultivation level was only the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, or the fifth layer, at most. Although this kind of cultivation level was not considered trash, it was still very far off from being proclaimed as a genius... not to mention actually becoming someone that everyone would only look up to.

"En?" Liu Yu Tong's almond eyes widened. The aura of a warrior of ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier trembled slightly, and suddenly all the taunting laughter came to a complete stop.

"Ling Han, how dare you!" At this moment, a furious roar was heard as two figures quickly rushed into the Martial Training Court.

One of the figures was none other than Cheng Hao. The other figure seemed to be slightly older than him, with a few similarities in their features.

This was Cheng Hao's older brother, Cheng Xiang, currently nineteen years old, ninth layer of Body Refining Tier.

Both were at the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. One was seventeen, the other was nineteen, there was no comparison between their respective natural talent. Of course, a nineteen-year-old who has achieved the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier would still be able to claim the title of a genius in Gray Cloud Town, although he was not as extraordinary as Shen Zi Yan.

"Peng, peng, peng, peng," Cheng Xiang's steps echoed loudly, hinting at his current terrifying state of utter fury. He stopped about three meters away from Ling Han, pointed at him, and said, "What despicable means have you used?"

Ling Han smiled coldly, and said, "So I won only because I made use of despicable means?"

"Of course, otherwise, how could a piece of trash like you ever

defeat my younger brother?" Cheng Xiang spoke loudly. Unlike Ling Han's infamous reputation as a piece of trash, if today's issue was not appropriately handled, the Cheng Clan's reputation would definitely be seriously impacted.

Thus, whether it was true that Ling Han had made use of despicable means or not, he had to insist that he had done so.

Hearing the word "trash", everyone's expressions became very strange.

Shen Zi Yan had just said something similar, and the result was being repeatedly slapped by Liu Yu Tong. This elite warrior of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier is still here, and you actually dare to publicly curse at Ling Han? Isn't this just asking for trouble?

With Ling Han's experience, he naturally could tell with a glance what Cheng Xiang's intentions were. He did not reveal them though, and only slowly said, "Oh, then how do I prove that I did not make use of those despicable means you're speaking of?"

"Heng, you used despicable means to bully my younger brother. As an older brother, how can I pretend that I did not see anything? Since you're so brave, then I dare you to spar with me!" Cheng Xiang obviously came well-prepared.

Everyone could not help thinking, 'How shameless!'

You are already in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, while Ling Han is only in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier. The difference of five layers, how could he compare to you?

However, as long as Ling Han was given a harsh beating, it would weaken the degree of embarrassment caused by Cheng Hao's previous actions, and also help to avenge Cheng Hao. This was a very smart move, and could be said to be hitting two birds with one stone.

Ling Han's smile disappeared and he shook his head, saying, "You

are in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, while I'm only in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, doesn't this seem very unjust?"

"I don't mind if you find someone to take your place in the spar!" Cheng Hao laughed loudly. Naturally, he was very familiar with Ling Han's label as trash. With such reputation, no one would befriend him in the whole academy, so where on earth could he find anyone to help him?

Furthermore, even if he did find someone to help him, what about it? Cheng Hao was in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, and was one of the strongest in the academy. What did he have to fear?

Everyone's expressions once more became very strange. Ling Han really did have someone in his corner, furthermore, that someone was an extremely strong warrior of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier that could, in one move, instantly kill a person in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier!

Wasn't this just looking for death?

Chapter 18: Lone Wolf's Blood

Liu Yu Tong stepped forward and said, “I will take his place!”

Cheng Xiang’s attention was previously completely focused on Ling Han, so it was only now that he noticed Liu Yu Tong. Seeing this incredibly stunning icy beauty, he couldn’t help but stare.

How was it possible that such a beautiful woman existed in this world?

Wait, did she just say she would be taking Ling Han’s place in the spar?

A powerful feeling of jealousy and anger arose within Cheng Xiang. What right did a piece of trash like Ling Han have to possess such a beautiful woman? This was unjust and completely laughable!

He quickly said, “Miss, you must be new here, and must have been deceived by this guy’s pretty words. He is the trash from Ling Clan, this is something that everyone in this academy knows very well.”

A fiery anger immediately flashed in Liu Yu Tong’s beautiful eyes. She could not help getting angered when she heard these people insult Ling Han.

What right do these people have to insult him in this way?

“Don’t, just now it was a woman, so I did not mind you doing my work for me. But now the opponent is a man, and a duel between men should be settled between men,” Ling Han said with a shake of his head, one hand placed on Liu Yu Tong’s shoulder.

Seeing such a scene, everyone in the area, even the females, felt that they were about to go mad with jealousy.

Ling Han actually had such intimate contact with their goddess! What enraged them even further was the fact that Liu Yu Tong

actually did not appear to resist it at all!

Liu Yu Tong frowned slightly. Cheng Xiang was different from Cheng Hao by far. The former was in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, and thus his cultivation level exceeded Ling Han's by a whole five layers! She knew Ling Han could perform miracles and possessed the ability to bypass the limitations of cultivation levels to challenge those much stronger than him, but the difference between him and his current opponent was really too large this time!

In her opinion, the chance of Ling Han winning was close to zero!

"Don't worry, you should have more faith in me!" Ling Han said with a smile.

"Then let's spar," Cheng Xiang said. He did not know how Ling Han had "bewitched" Liu Yu Tong, but he believed that once he had publicly defeated Ling Han, this extremely stunning beauty would naturally be able to see Ling Han's true colors.

Ling Han once again nodded towards Liu Yu Tong, and the icy beauty finally stepped back.

This little female attendant of his was really quite interesting.

Ling Han smiled. Once he turned towards Cheng Xiang though, his expression became cautious.

The gap of a whole five layers was big, very big. If Liu Yu Tong suppressed her power to the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier and battled with Cheng Xiang, she would only be able to grit her teeth in defeat

Ling Han dared to accept this challenge because he knew a martial arts technique called Lone Wolf's Blood—with every injury, the user would be able to erupt with power that surpassed his actual cultivation level. The heavier the injury, the stronger the power he erupted with would be.

In his past life, Ling Han would only be able to take a large

amount of alchemical medicines and pills to heal his injuries, but currently, he had no such healing medicines. But that was okay, because he now possessed an even more powerful secret art.

Indestructible Heaven Scroll!

“Come!” Ling Han beckoned with a finger. He was calm—he had already cast away the glory of a warrior of the Heaven Tier, the current him was only a minor martial artist of the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier. Everything was back to square one.

Cheng Xiang naturally would not treat Ling Han seriously. He started to casually circle around Ling Han, a cold smile on his face. He could easily, effortlessly suppress a mere minor character of the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier.

“Brother, thrash him!” Cheng Hao could not help calling out. Presently, his face hurt a lot. Moreover, he had even been forced to kneel and crawl around like a dog in front of everyone, making an embarrassment out of himself. He was naturally filled with furious hatred towards Ling Han.

There was one person who shared that feeling, and that was Shen Zi Yan. She too hated Ling Han to the bone.

Cheng Xiang nodded, and said, “All of you should take a good look, this is what happens to all who dare to defy our Cheng Clan!” The corners of his lips lifted upwards in a cruel smile, and a powerful punch flew towards Ling Han.

Ling Han gave a snort and clenched his fist before similarly flying towards his opponent.

What!?

Seeing such a scene, everyone thought that Ling Han had gone crazy.

A head-on power battle between the fourth layer and the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, this was an extremely stupid move.

Previously, wasn't Ling Han very smart? With his fearful ability to foresee attacks, he easily dispersed Cheng Hao's attacks' power, and thrashed the latter like he was a dog. But now against the much stronger Cheng Xiang, he actually cast away this kind of battle technique?

Did he think he would not lose fast enough?

At this moment, even Liu Yu Tong felt she was about to lose faith in Ling Han, because this kind of power battle was the purest, truest display of the strength of cultivation levels and disparity in strength.

Only Ling Han was filled with confidence. He of course would not be deliberately looking to be beaten.

'Come!'

"Peng!" The two fists crashed into each other. If the movement was slowed down by a hundred times, it could be clearly seen that, underneath the jolt of power, the skin on Ling Han's arm rose and fell like the water's surface from his fist all the way to his shoulder. Following a "pa pa pa pa" sound, the rupturing of arteries caused his whole arm to instantly become badly mangled.

The power gap truly was much too wide.

"Teng, teng, teng," Ling Han retreated a whole seven steps before he finally regained his balance.

"Hahahaha, trash will always be trash!" Cheng Xiang laughed coldly. Ever since Ling Han had entered the academy, he had become the target of bullying for him and Cheng Hao. Ling Han thought he could bring about a change in his fate now? In his dreams!

Ling Han's face was completely expressionless as the Indestructible Heaven Scroll continued to circulate within his body and the injury of his arm rapidly healed. However, due to the fresh blood covering his arm, his quickly recovering injuries could

not be seen. And with his injury, Lone Wolf's Blood also started to circulate within his body, causing his power to rise to a new level.

Fifth layer of Body Refining Tier!

Ling Han gave a shout and once again took the initiative, rushing towards Cheng Xiang.

"It's no use, Ling Trash, you will be a piece of trash your whole life!" Cheng Xiang laughed loudly and his fist flew towards Ling Han once again.

"Peng!"

The fifth layer of Body Refining Tier would still be vulnerable against the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, so once again, Ling Han was forced to retreat, spilling fresh blood. The right arm that had just healed became badly mangled once again.

Cheng Xiang looked a little surprised, because he sensed that his opponent's power had increased by a large margin compared to the previous attack, although he was still much weaker than himself.

Ling Han simultaneously circulated Indestructible Heaven Scroll and stimulated Lone Wolf's Blood. His eyes shone like a battle wolf's, filled with killing intent.

Sixth layer of Body Refining Tier!

Injury upon injury, Ling Han's power once again increased.

He roared and once again threw himself at Cheng Xiang.

Cheng Xiang's strength was extraordinary, but underneath Ling Han's stare, he actually felt a little frightened. He immediately grew angered—this was a piece of trash! For him to actually feel even a bit of dread towards a piece of trash... it was completely laughable!

He wanted to defeat Ling Han in one attack and injure him heavily, so that the latter wouldn't be able to get up again.

"Peng! Peng! Peng! Peng!"

The two fighters continuously attacked each other. Naturally, Ling Han was at the obvious disadvantage and, with every encounter, his opponent would cause him to suffer heavy injuries. And yet, he would immediately regain his battle spirit each time and retaliate. His determination was unbelievable.

Moreover, Ling Han's attacks were becoming fiercer and stronger, and slowly, he was actually able to fight on even footing with Cheng Xiang.

Seventh layer of Body Refining Tier!

Cheng Xiang was very clear on the fact that Ling Han's power had shockingly risen to the level of seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. Thankfully though, after increasing to such a degree, Ling Han's power did not increase any further. Otherwise, Cheng Xiang would truly start to feel fear.

It couldn't be helped. After all, the Lone Wolf's Blood also had its limits—it could only help Ling Han increase his power by three layers.

However, the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier against the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, the gap in power had shrunk to only two layers' difference!

Chapter 19: Trampled Beneath My Feet

Ling Han was now completely covered in blood. His temporary increase in power to the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier was obtained through sustaining serious injuries. He was now like an injured lone wolf—the more he was injured, the more he refused to surrender.

At first, it was as if the crowd was there just to watch a free show. But when they saw Ling Han being repeatedly injured yet continue to retaliate, their feelings, for some reason, were affected by his performance.

Even if Ling Han was a piece of trash, he was a piece of trash that deserved their respect!

What kind of person could have such determination and unyielding will?

To be unyielding even as his blood spilled, to be dauntless facing any and all setbacks!

Before they knew it, everyone's thoughts started to lean towards Ling Han, secretly hoping that he would emerge victorious.

In the world of martial artists, the weak did not deserve to be pitied, but an unyielding warrior would be able to gain respect. Ling Han used his blood and strong will to obtain something that his predecessor had longed for the most...

Respect!

This was also the reason why Ling Han had stubbornly decided to fight this battle, and even chosen such a “stupid” method, a head-on clash.

Of course, only he was aware that his current condition was not as horrible as everyone was thinking—Indestructible Heaven Scroll was circulating within his body and continuously healing his injuries, so they looked much worse than they in fact were.

However, even if they already somewhat recovered by now, the injuries he suffered were in no way faked. He was in agonizing pain, as if a fire was slowly burning up his spirit, but it was also this pain that allowed him to erupt with power that far exceeded his actual cultivation level.

He had to continuously take Return Origin Pills, battle and keep up the continuous circulation of Indestructible Heaven Scroll. All this led to too large a depletion of his Origin Power.

Ling Han was repeatedly forced to retreat, but he would keep on charging back into battle. As his fresh blood splattered, his indomitable willpower had affected a large part of the surrounding crowd. Some of the girls had even started shedding tears, asking Ling Han to stop fighting.

“Why won’t you fall!” The longer Cheng Xiang fought, the more flustered he became. How could Ling Han be so determined? Why was it that, no matter how much he was wounded, he refused to fall...? This fight put a great pressure on Cheng Xiang. The power of the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier was enough to be a threat to him, and with the repeated confrontations between them, his internal organs were also boiling over, causing him extreme discomfort.

He roared and attacked with both his fists. He had finally used a martial art skill, wanting to take down Ling Han as fast as possible!

It was one of Cheng Clan’s special skills—Expert Armed Fist.

Double peaks piercing the ear!

A martial artist that uses martial art skills and a martial artist that does not are at two completely different levels of power. Just like cultivation techniques, martial arts skills could also be categorized into Heaven, Earth, Black and Yellow Grades respectively. A good Yellow Grade martial arts skill can roughly double the user’s power.

Every major grade was further divided into three minor levels—high, medium, and low. For example, a Yellow Grade low level martial art skill would increase the user's power by around thirty percent, a medium level one would be able to raise the user's power by around forty to sixty percent, while a high level skill would increase the user's power around seventy to one hundred percent.

The Expert Armed Fist was a Yellow Grade medium level martial art skill. It could increase the user's power by around fifty percent, and the last three secret moves could increase the user's power by up to sixty percent!

Ling Han knew countless martial arts skills, even the rarely seen Heaven Grade high level martial arts skills—he knew seven of them and each could increase the user's power by ten times! However, due to the limitations of his current power level, he had no way to use these skills.

It was not just Heaven Grade skills that he couldn't use. Even Earth Grade or Black Grade skills were also out of the question for him due to his current limited cultivation.

So, he could only use Yellow Grade martial arts skills.

To use Black Grade martial arts skills, the user had to at least have the cultivation level of Gushing Spring Tier.

He tightened both fists, and moved into an attacking stance.

High level Yellow Grade martial arts skill, Dashing Panther Fist!

“Peng!”

A loud noise was heard, and the two fighters had already exchanged their attacks. Their speed was extremely fast—aside from Liu Yu Tong, only a few of the students who happened to have the cultivation of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier could see it clearly. Meanwhile, the majority of the crowd could only see that, after this confrontation, Cheng Xiang's body somehow flew

outwards.

“Si!” Everyone in the area was struck speechless as they sharply breathed in.

Cheng Xiang had actually flown out due to the force behind Ling Han’s attack... what kind of unfathomable event was this?

Meanwhile, even though Ling Han’s body was entirely covered in fresh blood, he had only taken a few steps backward.

What a grand reversal of the situation!

What was going on? Cheng Xiang had had the upper hand all this while, so why was it that he was actually horribly defeated once he used a martial arts skill?

But no matter how far their thoughts travelled, none of them would be able to guess that Ling Han had just used a high level Yellow Grade martial art skill.

How could that be possible? Even the two Great Clans of Gray Cloud Town only possessed medium level Yellow Grade martial arts skills. If an ordinary person managed to learn a low level Yellow Grade martial arts skill, he’d already die happy!

Only Liu Yu Tong’s beautiful eyes flashed with understanding. She was the only person who clearly knew that Three Yin Mysterious Arts Ling Han taught her was a Heaven Grade cultivation technique. Thus, what would be strange about Ling Han knowing a high level Yellow Grade martial arts skill?

Cheng Xiang moaned, wanting to get back up. However, the power behind Ling Han’s attack was really terrifying. Even just moving caused him to continuously throw up blood!

Just now, when they repeatedly exchanged their attacks, Cheng Xiang’s internal organs had already suffered from huge tremors, and the one attack just moments ago had immediately caused all the damage he had already sustained to blow up. This was a deciding attack that transformed quantity into quality!

“No, this isn’t possible!” Cheng Hao’s expression was one of utter disbelief. His older brother was an elite of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, how could he lose to a piece of trash?

This was definitely not real!

Ling Han walked towards Cheng Xiang. With every step, the injuries he had suffered were quickly healing. Once he was right in front of Cheng Xiang, all the injuries were fully healed, a testament to the great power of Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

“I, I’ve lost!” With everyone looking at them, there was no way for Cheng Xiang to deny the fact that he had lost. He glared ferociously at Ling Han, his face filled with denial. He could not understand how Ling Han had defeated him.

Ling Han slowly raised his leg, moving it above Cheng Xiang.

“You, what are you planning to do?” Cheng Xiang could not help revealing a fearful expression. Was Ling Han planning to step on his face? “Don’t go too far!”

“Too far?” Ling Han snorted, one foot already firmly placed on Cheng Xiang’s face, “You, as a cultivator of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, fighting with me... it isn’t considered ‘too far’? The first thing your younger brother told me was to get lost, and the first thing you did was to accuse me of using despicable means... isn’t that considered ‘too far’?”

So you’re the only ones allowed to do as you like? There is no such logic on this world!

Since your skills are inferior, you should speak less rubbish!”

He put more strength into his foot and Cheng Xiang immediately let out a pained groan. However, what he felt more was shame—he had actually been trampled underneath someone’s foot! Furthermore, this person was the publicly acknowledged trash of the academy! Of course, after today, Ling Han would definitely be able to clear his name as a piece of trash, but this all came at the

price of stepping on Cheng Xiang's face. This was even more unacceptable to Cheng Xiang.

People in the surrounding area too were lost for words.

Before this, they had only hoped that Ling Han would emerge victorious, but who amongst them had truly believed that Ling Han would win?

They could not help recalling Liu Yu Tong's words—in less than three months, Ling Han would become an existence that all of them could only look up to!

Perhaps, three months might not even be necessary. Presently, there was already quite a number of them looking up to him!

“Ling Han, you will definitely regret this!” Cheng Xiang said in a furious, poisonous voice. To actually be trampled beneath the foot of a piece of trash, this was a shame that he would never be able to clear from his reputation.

“Is that so?” Ling Han smiled faintly, this kind of threat was completely meaningless on him. “Beg for mercy!” he said, “If your attitude is sincere enough, I will spare you, otherwise, you may have to lie down here for quite a long time!”

“You-“ Cheng Xiang felt as if he was about to explode. Ling Han actually wanted him to beg for mercy in front of all these people?

Alternate translation is twin peaks piercing/passing through the ear(s). For obvious reasons, that is not the appropriate one here, but I thought it would be interesting to share that... it's likely a pun on the part of the author.

Chapter 20: Pill Concoction

“If you’re not going to beg for mercy, then just continue to lie down there. Lying down is nothing too tiring, anyway!” Ling Han spoke calmly.

He has always been the kind of person to return the kindness of others tenfold; however, he was also the type that, if offended, would return it back by ten times as well.

Since Cheng Xiang and his brother wanted to bully him, then he would trample all over them, making them into complete fools.

Lying down isn’t tiring?

Lying down indeed was not tiring, but if there was a foot stepping on your face, then the issue was no longer about whether it was tiring or not.

Cheng Xiang gritted his teeth tightly to the point that even his gums started bleeding. “Ka ka ka,” the grinding of his teeth could clearly be heard. If he could, he really wanted to tear Ling Han into a million pieces, but for now, he could only lower his prideful head and say, “I’m sorry, please, spare me!”

“You’re speaking too softly, I can’t hear you,” Ling Han said calmly.

“I’m sorry, please spare me!” Cheng Xiang cried out loudly. As these words left his mouth, he felt as if his entire person was about to fall apart. All his pride, dignity and self-esteem as the Eldest Young Master of the Cheng Clan had all dispersed like the popping of a bubble along with this plea for mercy.

“Be more sensible in future, there are some people that you can’t afford to offend!” Ling Han said, taking back his leg. “You should feel fortunate that I’m in a generous mood now.”

This was considered generous?

Everyone was lost for words. Cheng Xiang was not Cheng Hao, he was the Eldest Young Master of the Cheng Clan. To shame him in such a public setting was the same as slapping the whole Cheng Clan! This would definitely not be settled peacefully.

There would definitely arise a fierce battle between the Cheng and the Ling Clans; it might even become a blood feud between the two clans. It would become complete chaos.

Shen Zi Yan looked on, her white teeth biting fiercely on her red lips. Her current feelings were indescribably complex.

They were both in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, but there was a large gap between their individual ability. For example, she too had defeated many experienced martial artists in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, so even if Ling Han was able to defeat Cheng Xiang, that did not mean that he could defeat her.

But the problem was, what was Ling Han's current cultivation level?

When this guy too rose up to the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, who amongst those of the whole Body Refining Tier would be able to fight with him on an equal footing?

To be invincible amongst those of the same tier, that was the quality of a ruler!

No, she definitely did not have any regrets. This was a piece of trash, a piece of trash that she had already rejected a few years ago! A piece of trash that could only look up to her throughout his whole life!

Ling Han walked out of the Martial Training Court, Liu Yu Tong by his side as per usual. The two strolled around the academy for a while. After that, they sat down beneath a large tree. Leaning against the tree trunk, neither of them spoke.

After a while, Liu Yu Tong finally couldn't bear it anymore and

said, “I never thought that you had such poor eyes, to actually like that kind of shallow, self-centred girl!”

Ling Han couldn’t hold back his hearty laughter. He turned towards her and said, “My little attendant girl, are you jealous?”

“Who, who’d be jealous!” A red blush rose up on Liu Yu Tong’s beautiful face, making her even more beautiful, “Don’t delude yourself!”

“Hey, is that any way to speak to your master?” Ling Han laughed. Teasing this little attendant girl of his was really quite interesting sometimes.

Liu Yu Tong rolled her eyes, but very quickly changed the topic, and said, “Do you plan to continue to stay in Gray Cloud Town?” This place really was too small to fit the dragon that Ling Han was.

Ling Han laughed and said, “I’ll go take a look at Hu Yang Academy after a while, Father hopes that I can go there to step on the faces of the so-called geniuses there.”

Liu Yu Tong was struck speechless, before saying, “You can’t defeat even me now, and you actually want to go to step all over all the geniuses of Hu Yang Academy? You should be aware that I am not the strongest fighter in Hu Yang Academy.”

“You’ll see when we get there,” Ling Han no longer spoke any grand words. Only he himself was aware of the great, terrifying potential that he possessed.

When the sun had set, the two returned to the Ling Clan Residence.

“You little brat-” Just as they were entering the Main Hall, they saw Ling Dong Xing striding towards them, his expression extremely grim.

At first, Ling Han thought that his skipping class today was discovered by his father. Just when he was about to say something, Ling Dong Xing had already rushed to him and embraced him

tightly before laughing heartily and saying, “You thrashed the two brats from the Cheng Clan, yet you didn’t immediately return to inform your old man and let me be happy too?”

Ling Han released the breath he was holding before he said, “Then, Father, how did you find out?”

“This is no small matter, how could I not find out about it after such a long while?” Ling Dong Xing stopped his hearty laughter, regained his serious expression and said, “Han’er, you really show much promise, the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier actually defeated the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier! However, this is much too shocking, I’m worried that some people would spare no expense just to eliminate you.”

Ling Han nodded. Most people’s attitudes towards geniuses would be filled with admiration and respect, but he no longer belonged to the level of geniuses. Rather, he was more like a freak, to an inconceivable extent at that.

“I’ve released information saying that you’re actually in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. You had just deliberately kept a low profile in the past,” Ling Dong Xing continued.

This kind of explanation was actually full of gaps. After all, keeping a low profile and being trash were two different matters. But when compared with the event when a person only in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier defeated the ninth layer of the Body Refining Tier... wouldn’t this explanation be easier to accept for the public?

Moreover, the strength Ling Han displayed in the last stages of the fight was the seventh layer of the Body Refining Tier, so this kind of explanation would be easier to believe.

“You don’t have to go to the academy tomorrow to avoid others from seeing any discrepancies,” Ling Dong Xing said. Anyone of the Element Gathering Tier would be able to tell with one look what Ling Han’s actual cultivation level was. If that happened, the

lie would immediately be exposed.

This was exactly what Ling Han wanted. However, the problem now was that he could not only not go the academy, he couldn't even leave the clan residence. Because he had played too much today, there would definitely be a lot of interested parties in Gray Cloud Town. There may even be some who would watch out for his appearance from nearby the Ling Clan Residence.

There was only one solution, and that was to have his actual cultivation level really reach the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. In this way, the lie would become the truth.

Since he couldn't leave the residence anyways, Ling Han decided to place his full focus on cultivating. Ling Dong Xing was in full support of this, and under Ling Han's request, he provided him with a large amount of monetary funds. Meanwhile, Ling Han had Liu Yu Tong go purchase medicinal ingredients as he would be personally concocting an alchemical pill.

The alchemical pill that Ling Han wanted to concoct was named the "Little Cloud and Water Pill". Taking this pill would greatly increase the cultivation speed of a martial artist in Body Refining Tier. While this pill could be bought, the medicinal effects were too poor. Ling Han had taken one, and it was at most only half as good as the one he concocted.

You can do a lot of things if you have enough money. Liu Yu Tong very quickly returned with the medicinal ingredients Ling Han had requested, also bringing with her an alchemy furnace.

"It's a bit challenging for a martial artist at fourth layer of Body Refining Tier to concoct pills," Ling Han murmured. Ordinarily, one could only start concocting pills once they reached the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, at least. Otherwise, if there was not enough origin power to support the concocting process, one would not be able to continue concocting when they reach the advanced stage of the process. Thus, the result would naturally be failure.

‘Looks like I have to simultaneously take Return Origin Pills and concoct the pill.’

He skilfully separated the various ingredients, his hands moving at such an extremely fast pace that Liu Yu Tong, who had been standing at the side, felt that her eyes were blurring. Now, she finally believed that Ling Han knew how to concoct pills and was not just knowledgeable in the theory of alchemy.

Was there anything this guy didn’t know?

Ling Han threw several medicinal ingredients into the furnace. However, he did not dump everything inside. He had only threw about one third of the ingredients on hand, then his right hand jolted, he gave a snort, and suddenly a flame appeared on his extended palm.

Ignition—this was the basic ability every alchemist should have. It was also why every alchemist needed to have a Fire Alignment Spirit Base.

Chapter 21: Fifth Layer of Body Refining Tier

The reason why concocting pills was a difficult task was because it was difficult to control the temperature level.

Should one use firewood to start the fire, it would be very difficult to control the heat level of the flames, let alone achieve the precision required to concoct pills. In theory, the higher the grade of alchemical pill, the stricter the requirements for controlling the fire.

Precision aside, the alchemist also had to be able to stimulate the heat to an extreme level; the alchemist's cultivation had to be very high to achieve this. Ordinarily speaking, an alchemist should be able to concoct pills that are at most one level higher than his own cultivation level.

For example, for Ling Han who was in Body Refining Tier, his limit should be concocting middle level Yellow Grade pills.

However, the primary requirement was the ability to control fire. There were also certain requirements for the heat level, which was why too low a cultivation level would make concocting pills impossible, the minimum being the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. Ling Han was only in the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, and yet he dared to concoct a pill... the reason why he dared to do that lay in his Spirit Base.

As he possessed the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus, the Origin Power within his body could be transformed to Gold, Wood, Water, Fire or Earth Alignment. The heat level he could control was not really very high, the maximum level being four hundred degrees, but it was enough to concoct the Little Cloud and Water Pill. [ED/N: Most likely Celsius]

'It's worthy of the name "Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus"--the five elements are in a mutually dependent relationship with one another, and seemingly inexhaustible!' Ling Han praised silently.

An ordinary Fire Alignment Spirit Base in the Body Refining Tier would only be able to release flames that could reach the maximum temperature of two hundred degrees. Even he who had had a pure Fire Alignment Spirit Base in his last life was no different.

The Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus could transform into any of the five elemental alignments, which was something that the Nine Yang Fire Spirit Base could never compare with.

It was indeed worthy of the name of Immortal Grade Spirit Base!

Ling Han's left hand continued to spin, heating every nook and cranny of the furnace. The heat required for various parts of the furnace was different--in future, to concoct high grade alchemical pills would require a furnace with high specifications, such as the level of heat penetration and the level of heat endurance, to name a few of them. A good furnace was something over which any self-respecting alchemist would go to war!

Occasionally, he would throw in one of the medicinal ingredients into the furnace. Sometimes, he would open the lid of the furnace, while at others, he would keep it closed. His practiced movements were carried out at such a fast speed that they would just be a blur in any observer's eyes.

Liu Yu Tong, who had been standing at the side, was already speechless, her eyes wide.

Thank goodness she wasn't an alchemist and so did not really have much of an understanding of this profession. Otherwise, if she had known that the lowest requirement for an alchemist's cultivation level was the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, then she would definitely be even more shocked.

Then again, she was already shocked enough by now. A few more times and she might pass out due to extreme shock.

The higher the temperature of the flames, the more Origin Power the alchemist had to use. Very quickly, Ling Han felt that he was

nearing exhaustion, so he quickly tossed a Return Origin Pill into his mouth, chewed it up and immediately felt Origin Power enter his body bit by bit, allowing him to continue the process.

Time passed slowly, and Ling Han continuously took Return Origin Pills. After two hours, Ling Han suddenly gave a loud shout and bit his tongue, fresh blood spilling. Under the power of the Lone Wolf's Blood, his origin power suddenly rose up to another level, causing the heat level of the flames to rise up to about six hundred degrees.

"Pill completed!" He suddenly retracted the flames. The final surge of the flames was the finishing touch that increased the effects of the alchemical pill by about five percent.

Unfortunately, the four hundred degree temperature was his limit. He could only injure himself to stimulate the Lone Wolf's Blood if he wanted to release a heat of six hundred degrees.

He lifted the lid of the furnace and a faint medicinal fragrance instantly wafted out.

Liu Yu Tong could not help coming closer to peek into the furnace. There were exactly seventeen round vermilion-colored pills inside. The surface of the pills sparkled temptingly, appearing almost translucent. Although she herself did not know anything about alchemy, she was certain that Ling Han had succeeded in concocting the pills.

"You really are a freak!" She said, a strange expression in her eyes.

Ling Han laughed loudly, and said, "You'll get used to it soon."

Liu Yu Tong wasn't sure whether she would become crazy or grow numb under the continuous assault of these miracles.

Ling Han took a Little Cloud and Water Pill, swallowed it in one mouthful and immediately began cultivation.

"Hong!" The Little Cloud and Water Pill was like calcium oxide,

whereas the environmental Qi was like water. The encounter between the two immediately gave rise to a powerful reaction, leading to the assault of a terrifying amount of Spiritual Qi. The Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus within Ling Han's Dantian stirred lightly, accepting the incoming Qi and absorbing it at a frightening speed.

'Only an Immortal Grade Spirit Base would be able to withstand such intensity,' Ling Han thought while circulating Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill to transform the incoming Spiritual Qi into his own Origin Power, filling his limbs and veins with it.

An hour later, the medicinal effects of the first Little Cloud and Water Pill were used up. Ling Han swallowed a second pill and continued cultivating.

However, by the time the medicinal effects of the third Little Cloud and Water Pill were used up as well, Ling Han's tolerance level had also reached its limits. He felt extremely tired, and the upper half of his body immediately toppled over as he fell asleep on the floor right where he was.

Liu Yu Tong, who had been beside him all the while, could not help shaking her head. She then helped Ling Han onto the bed and attentively took off his shoes and covered him with the quilt. She then exited the inner chamber and fell asleep on a chair in the outer chamber.

She was a very responsible follower whose main duty was to protect Ling Han.

The night passed. When Ling Han opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was the canopy of his bed, which caused him to be slightly surprised because he had no recollection of climbing onto the bed last night.

But this was not important.

He smiled, because his cultivation level had once again risen to a

new level as he broke through to the fifth layer of Body Refining Tier.

The reason why he could break through two layers yesterday was because the past cultivation rate of this body was too slow. The first time the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus was active at full power naturally led to a one-time eruption. Of course, this would not happen again in future.

"You, you've broken through again!" When Ling Han stepped out of the internal chamber, Liu Yu Tong immediately looked as if she had seen a ghost. She was even stumbling over her words, her eyes fixed in a stare directed at Ling Han.

"This is only the Body Refining Tier, this speed is normal," Ling Han said, completely calm.

'Hell, it's normal!'

Liu Yu Tong was about to go crazy. In any case, as someone who had a Heaven Grade Spirit Base, she spent ten days to break through to the second layer of Body Refining Tier once she stepped onto the path of a cultivator. As for breaking through from the fourth layer to the fifth layer of Body Refining Tier, it took her twenty five days.

How could twenty five days' time compare to a single night?

"You're not going to break through to the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier tomorrow, are you?" Liu Yu Tong asked suddenly.

Ling Han thought for a moment, before he shook his head and said, "No."

Hearing this, Liu Yu Tong finally released the breath she was holding. If Ling Han said "yes", she really might have gone crazy.

"I should be able to the day after tomorrow," Ling Han continued after a slight pause.

Monster! He had to be a monster!

Liu Yu Tong stared at him resentfully, determined that she would never try to guess this guy's cultivation speed again. Anyways, she decided she would just pretend that he's a monster, so that no matter what speed he cultivated with, she would not think it strange in any way.

Ling Han laughed. After having breakfast, he once again began cultivating behind closed doors.

However, there were limits to one's vitality. He could not possibly cultivate without end. Thus, even if he had started cultivation during daytime, in truth, it did not really increase his cultivation speed by much. However, he was now fighting against time, so it'd be good even if there was only a minuscule increase in his cultivation speed.

Meanwhile, Liu Yu Tong's progress was also extremely rapid. With the aid of a Heaven Grade cultivation skill, she would be able to reach the peak period of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier within two months at most, and even she herself was in a state of disbelief over this kind of cultivation speed.

Chapter 22: Trouble From Within The Clan

Liu Yu Tong had once believed that she had to be nineteen or even twenty years old before she could break through to Gushing Spring Tier.

This was already quite fast. In the whole history of Rain Country, there were very, very few that could compare with her. But now, she had a very high chance of breaching this gap at the age of eighteen!

Even though it was only the difference of two years, just how old was she? It would be shocking enough for a cultivator of her age to speed up his or her breakthrough by a few months, but she had sped up her breakthrough by two whole years!

This was all because of Ling Han.

However, when you compare this kind of progression rate with Ling Han's own, then it really was nothing worth mentioning.

From the second layer to the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier, he spent one night. From the fourth layer to the fifth layer of Body Refining Tier, one night. From the fifth layer to the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier, two nights.

When others talk about cultivating, they'd be talking about months or even years spent cultivating. But for Ling Han, his cultivation rate was counted in days--he was such a freak.

Ling Han only laughed and said, "This cultivation speed can't really be considered fast. There are some demonic beasts that are already Element Gathering Tier at birth, some are even Gushing Spring Tier. These creatures are an existence that have been blessed by the heavens."

"Are there really such demonic beasts?" Liu Yu Tong's beautiful eyes widened. There were actually demonic beasts that were even stronger at birth than she was now?

"Of course!" Ling Han nodded. He paused, then continued, "I have seen historical records depicting that some demonic beasts, which are already extinct, were even at Heaven Tier at birth. They were born invincible."

Liu Yu Tong did not believe him. She asked, "Since they were already in Heaven Tier at birth, then why would they become extinct?"

"The world has its own rules. Who would be able to fight against time?" Ling Han shook his head. In his last life, it was because he did not want to just die and rot that he had resolutely stepped onto a dangerous path, seeking a way to break through to Shattering Void Tier. "There are too many mysteries on this land that can easily erase even those in Heaven Tier."

In his previous life, when he had been a powerful existence of Heaven Tier, there were many places that he dared not venture to, fearing that he could fall from the sky at every turn there.

After two days of hard cultivation, Ling Han exerted more effort to complete accumulating in the fifth layer of Body Refining Tier. He then easily reached the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier.

Because he had already walked this familiar path in his last life, the comprehension of his cultivation was a problem that he needed not think about.

"However, from the sixth layer to the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, this is a tiny, little leap. Three days won't be enough, I'd need four days, or maybe even five days' time," Ling Han gave a sigh. He'd just have to continue working hard at cultivation for another four or five days.

Beside him, Liu Yu Tong, who had been listening to Ling Han's resentful complaints, experienced a sudden impulse to go crazy.

'This freak!'

One day later, Ling Han had reached the early period of the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier. On the second day, he had already reached the middle period. On the third day, he was in the late period. On the fourth day, he had achieved the peak of the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier.

He did not drag it into the fifth day. Ling Han began to break through and, less than an hour later, he had stepped into the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier.

A sixteen-year-old with the cultivation of seventh layer of Body Refining Tier... in Rain Country, such a cultivator would be considered "acceptable". Moreover, if anyone was told that Ling Han had been in the second layer of Body Refining Tier and spent eight days to break through to the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, they would definitely not believe it.

Thus, even Liu Yu Tong, who had observed the whole process, was absent-minded, her expression distant. When she walked, her movements made it look like she was floating on air.

She had truly been shocked.

"I can finally go out," Ling Han stretched. Now that he had a youthful body, his mentality too became youthful. After being confined to his chamber for seven days, he felt as if he was a fierce tiger that had been imprisoned.

"Let's go see Father, the Cheng Clan should have acted by now," he murmured.

It was quite coincidental. Although Ling Dong Xing had been so busy that he was nowhere to be found these few days, today he happened to be sitting in his study. However, his mood appeared to be very bad, his brows wrinkled in a deep frown.

"Father, I guess the Cheng Clan has made their move?" Ling Han asked directly.

Ling Dong Xing did not raise his head to look at him. He only

gave a nod, continuing to write something on a piece of paper.

"Is the situation very bad?" Ling Han asked.

Ling Dong Xing heaved a sigh before finally putting his pen down and saying, "It's very bad! Though our Ling Clan has numerous properties, there are only two that are most profitable to the clan. One is the mine, the other is the medicine shop."

Ling Han knew that the Ling Clan owned a copper mine. The ownership of this mine fell into the hands of the Ling Clan only thirty years ago--the Ling Clan had paid an extremely heavy price to obtain this mine as many powerful warriors of the clan had died in the process.

As for the medicine shop, it would purchase lower grade medicinal pills from Heaven's Medicine Pavilion and resell them to customers at a price a little higher than the original price. Although this was only a simple purchase-and-resale trade, because there was an enormous market for medicinal pills, this was a major source of income for the clan. The actual profit from selling each pill might have been small, but the number of transactions more than made up for it

The weakness of the medicine shop was that it completely relied on the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. However, because the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion wanted to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the locally influential parties, the two Great Clans of the town could each obtain some pills to sell.

"Five days ago, our mine had been attacked by an unknown party, leading to quite a few casualties. Now everyone is in a state of anxiety. Even though we increased wages, there are not many who are willing to enter the mine."

Ling Dong Xing continued to say, "Furthermore, Alchemist Ma from the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion had suddenly started making things difficult for us. He said that the batch of medicinal pills sent from Headquarters this time has been delayed on the road for some

reason and the delivery will be late. Now, our stock of pills in the warehouse is close to being completely sold out. If the situation continues and we still aren't able to restock, then the medicine shop can only be temporarily closed."

Once the medicine shop closed its doors, the shop's reputation would definitely be affected. Even if it once again opened its doors to do business in the future, some customers would definitely be lost.

"These two days, our finances are already a bit tight. We must figure out something as quick as possible," Ling Dong Xing sighed.

Although the Ling Clan was a large existence with various properties, their expenses were also very large. There was a saying, the poor practice cultural arts while the rich practice martial arts. Cultivation was an extremely expensive endeavor. And now, the two key businesses of the Ling Clan were hit at the same time, thus the clan funds immediately became tight. If things went on like this, there would be big trouble. In fact, they may even be forced to sell off some of their less important businesses.

"It's done by the Cheng Clan!" Ling Han said immediately, very certain.

Ling Dong Xing nodded. Their two greatest businesses encountered difficulties at the same time, there could never be such a huge coincidence in this world. He tapped his finger once on the table, and said, "There's also a traitor."

Ling Han's eyes became cold, and he said, "Ling Zhong Kuan?"

"That's right!" He did not plan to conceal anything from his own son. He scoffed, "Once something happened to the mine, I immediately increased the numbers of the patrolling party, yet they didn't even spot the enemy. Unless someone had leaked the patrolling routes beforehand, how could this be possible?"

It was likely that once Ling Zhong Kuan heard that Cheng Xiang

and his brother had both been thrashed, he had secretly met with Cheng Wen Kun and reached some kind agreement with the latter-most likely it was to have Cheng Clan aid him in snatching the position of Clan Head. Though only he himself knew what kind of humiliating terms he'd agreed to in exchange for their assistance.

"I've made a lunch appointment with Alchemist Ma of the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. I'd definitely have to give him some benefits. Otherwise, the clan would really be in a big trouble," Ling Dong Xing continued to say.

Alchemist Ma.... Ma Da Jun?

Ling Han could not help the strange expression on his face, as he said, "I'll accompany you, Father."

"Your duty now is to concentrate on cultivation, unless you reach the seventh layer of Body-pu!" Ling Dong Xing finally raised his head to look directly at Ling Han. This one look caused him to choke, his expression slack.

Had Liu Yu Tong seen his reaction, she would definitely feel very comforted. She couldn't very well be the only person to be shocked by Ling Han's cultivation speed, right?

Chapter 23: Thoughtless

"Han, Han'er, you, you, you... you've already reached the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier!" Ling Dong Xing stammered. If someone had told him in the past that one day he would be shocked speechless by someone in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, he'd definitely give the speaker a good, solid slap. But now, it was himself he wanted to give a good, solid slap--to make sure that the sight before him was real and he wasn't merely dreaming!

"Yes, so you do not have to worry anymore, Father," Ling Han smiled.

Ling Dong Xing's face twitched, but after a while, he could not stop himself from laughing long and loud. It was as if all the worries that had troubled his mind these few days had evaporated. His son had shown such promise--what else did he need to worry about?

"Good son, good son!" He was unbearably excited. He finally believed that his son truly had the ability to help him rescue his wife!

"Then, tonight we'll head to the dinner together," Ling Dong Xing said with a nod. Now that his son was showing more and more promise, the position of Clan Head definitely would be passed down to his son in future, thus it'd be good to have Ling Han follow by his side and learn through observation.

Ling Han kept up the smile on his face. When he imagined Alchemist Ma seeing him later tonight, he could practically see the thunderstruck expression on the latter's face.

That night, Ling Dong Xing and his son, accompanied by four attendants, arrived at "Xuan Yu House". This was where Ling Dong

Xing had invited Alchemist Ma for dinner.

While they were waiting in one of the private rooms of the restaurant, Ling Dong Xing and Ling Han talked with each other.

"Peng!" The door was suddenly pushed open, and two people entered.

They were Ling Zhong Kuan and Ling Mu Yun!

"What are the two of you doing here?" Ling Dong Xing said coldly.

"The clan is in such big trouble, how could I not come?" Ling Zhong Kuan did not wait to be invited before sitting down and saying to Ling Dong Xing, "I'd advise you to step back from this issue, and leave this matter for me to handle."

"You?" Ling Dong Xing laughed coldly, and said, "Why?"

"You must have offended Alchemist Ma in some way. Otherwise, how could it be that he would make trouble for our clan for no reason?" Ling Zhong Kuan spoke slowly, then gesturing at Ling Mu Yun, said, "This boy went to be examined yesterday. He has a great potential for fire control. Thus, hehe, he has already been accepted by Alchemist Ma as an apprentice. After a few years' hard work, Alchemist Ma would take him in as an official disciple. In the future, he would become an alchemist."

Ling Mu Yun walked up to stand proudly beside Ling Zhong Kuan. There was immeasurable pride on his face.

After the "trouble" caused by Ling Han, he had lost the chance to enroll into Hu Yang Academy. But who would have thought that when a door closed, a window would open. He actually had a great potential for fire control, so there was a high chance that he would become an alchemist in future.

Alchemist--the most powerful, most noble profession in the whole of Gray Cloud Town... no, the whole of Rain Country!

Ling Zhong Kuan was very proud. His two sons weren't even able to compare with Ling Dong Xing, but that was all right, for his grandson was much, much more outstanding than Ling Han!

"Pu!"

He looked closely at Ling Han for a moment before suddenly gasping in shock.

This, this, this, this, this, what was this? The seventh layer of Body Refining Tier? No, no, no, no, no, he must have seen wrongly, how could Ling Han be in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier!

Ling Zhong Kuan could not help rubbing his eyes a few times and taking another close look at Ling Han. However, the powerful air around Ling Han was still the same.

Seventh layer of Body Refining Tier through and through.

Did this brat take some kind of godly medicine?

Ling Zhong Kuan could not control the violent twitching of his wrinkled face. He had truly experienced a tremendous shock.

"Grandfather, are you all right?" Ling Mu Yun felt that his grandfather was behaving very oddly. Weren't they supposed to strut around now, rubbing the fact that he was going to become an alchemist in the faces of Ling Dong Xing and his son? Why was his grandfather suddenly acting so silly?

"Seventh, seventh layer of Body Refining Tier!" Ling Zhong Kuan stuttered out.

That's right, Ling Mu Yun was in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. What was so strange about that, didn't he already know that? Ling Mu Yun looked strangely at Ling Zhong Kuan. Why was his grandfather suddenly behaving so abnormally?

"Not you, him!" Ling Zhong Kuan said, pointing at Ling Han.

"Pu!"

Ling Mu Yun gasped in shock. Seventh layer of Body Refining Tier? What kind of joke was this? In the clan, every member knew Ling Han's infamous reputation as a piece of trash. He had cultivated for many years, and yet had only managed to reach the second layer of Body Refining Tier. Otherwise, why else would he be labeled as trash in the clan?

If Ling Han, who was now in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, was considered a piece of trash, then what about him, who had only reached the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier at eighteen? Was he the ultimate piece of trash?

"Impossible, this is definitely impossible!" He muttered in complete disbelief.

But he knew very well that his grandfather was in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so there was no way he could be mistaken.

"Haha, what do you think of my son now? Not bad, right?" Ling Dong Xing laughed heartily. "This kind of natural talent should be good enough to enroll in the Hu Yang Academy, right?"

Hearing these words, Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson's expressions became even uglier.

They took advantage of the fact that Ling Dong Xing was away to force Ling Han to give up the chance to enroll into Hu Yang Academy, and the result was running into a stone wall. Ling Dong Xing was deliberately mentioning the Hu Yang Academy to taunt them with it.

Ling Mu Yun was still very young, thus he couldn't remain composed and said, "What's the big deal about Hu Yang Academy? I have entered the world of alchemists now, and I will become the most respected man in Rain Country in the future!"

"Is that so?" Ling Han shook his head, and said, "I can guarantee that you will never become an alchemist's apprentice, so of course,

you will never become an alchemist either."

"Hahahaha, who do you think you are? Do you actually think you can influence Alchemist Ma's decision?" Ling Mu Yun laughed coldly. He felt this was the biggest joke in the world--if Ling Han really had such ability, then why would Alchemist Ma purposely cause trouble and delay the distribution of alchemical pills for the clan?

Ling Han did not say anything else. He only smiled--after all, things would become clear later.

However, even Ling Dong Xing himself did not take Ling Han's threat seriously. In his opinion, although his son had truly displayed a great natural talent in the field of martial arts, he couldn't possibly have any relations with Alchemist Ma.

Although the four of them all belonged to the Ling Clan, they were mutually antagonistic, so how could they possibly have any common topics to converse with each other? After the short verbal battle, they each kept silent, waiting for the arrival of Alchemist Ma.

However, this Alchemist Ma really liked to put on airs. After a long time, he still had not appeared. When they were nearing the limits of their patience, they finally heard footsteps from outside the door.

"Zhi..." the door opened, and a medium-sized man entered. This man could only be Alchemist Ma.

There was only one alchemist in the whole of Gray Cloud Town, even more so only one surnamed Ma.

Ling Dong Xing, Ling Zhong Kuan and Ling Mu Yun all stood up, grasping their fists in greeting. Ling Mu Yun even bent and knelt in front of the newcomer and said respectfully, "Disciple Mu Yun hereby greets Master!"

An alchemist's apprentice could barely be counted as half an

alchemist's disciple.

"You may rise," Ma Da Jun casually waved his hands, and nodded at Ling Dong Xing, saying, "You don't have to waste your time on pleasantries. Let's just get down to business. I'm a very busy man."

"Ling Han, how dare you not greet Alchemist Ma?" Ling Mu Yun immediately pointed at Ling Han. He had very sharp eyes and had immediately noticed that Ling Han had not greeted Alchemist Ma. He was even just sitting there as if nothing important was going on.

Ling Dong Xing was very surprised. The reason he had invited Alchemist Ma to dinner tonight was to curry favor with the man and solve the medicine supply problem. But now Ling Mu Yun had taken advantage of and directly pointed out this weakness; were things going to turn bad?

He could not help getting angry in secret. The important thing was to settle the problem that the Ling Clan was facing now, how could Ling Mu Yun be so petty? He suddenly felt that he really wanted to kill this little brat in one blow.

"Hey, he really doesn't know the rules of the game!" Ling Zhong Kuan too harrumphed.

Chapter 24: I Have No Such Disciple

Ling Mu Yun had very fortunately taken hold of Ling Han's weakness so he naturally would not easily give it up. He continued aggressively, "Alchemist is the most respected, most dignified profession in the whole of Rain Country, yet you not only did not stand up to greet my master upon his arrival, but also continue to remain seated? How arrogant can you be?"

Kneel down quickly and beg my Master for a punishment!"

Ling Dong Xing frowned slightly. Alchemists were indeed very rare and held a high status in Rain Country. For example, even though this Ma Da Jun was only in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, as he was a Yellow Grade medium level alchemist, even strong warriors of the Element Gathering Tier like himself and Ling Zhong Kuan had to show him some face and satisfy Ma Da Jun's ego.

Now that Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson had taken advantage of this point to attack Ling Han, he really might encounter some trouble.

Clasping his fists, Ling Dong Xing said, "Alchemist Ma, many apologies. If my son has done anything to offend you, I hereby apologize on his behalf. As a forgiving, generous man, please do not lower yourself to the same level as my son."

Ma Da Jun hadn't even noticed Ling Han. He only found out what was going on after hearing Ling Mu Yun's reprimand, so he couldn't control his rising dissatisfaction and said, "Ling Clan Head, you're really quite incredible. You invited me to dinner, so I offered you due respect by coming here. Yet you actually allow your son to humiliate me? Snort, what kind of logic is this?"

"Ling Han, kneel down now!" Ling Mu Yun smiled coldly. He knew very well that alchemical pills were one of the most important source of income for the clan, thus even if Ling Dong

Xing did not want to, he had no choice but to concede on this issue and pressure Ling Han to do as told.

'Forced to kneel by his own old man, Ling Han would definitely be very depressed and unbearably sorrowful, wouldn't he? Hahahaha!"

"Alchemist Ma-" Ling Dong Xing tried again to advise Ma Da Jun to let things go.

Ma Da Jun only raised his hand to stop Ling Dong Xing from continuing to speak. He did not even look at Ling Han and only said casually, "Let your son kneel down in front of me to explain."

"Peng!"

Ling Dong Xing slammed his hand heavily down on the table and said, "Alchemist Ma, I do not know what benefits you have received from the Cheng Clan to help them make trouble for our Ling Clan. But don't you dare go to far. You actually want my, Ling Dong Xing's son, to kneel down? Get lost!"

"How dare you!" Ling Zhong Kuan immediately shouted loudly, "Ling Dong Xing, what are you trying to do? Are you trying to bring ruin to the clan? The clan does not just belong to you alone! As someone who does not care about the big picture, what right do you have to continue to hold onto the position of Clan Head of the Ling Clan?"

Ling Dong Xing's gaze turned heavy, and he said, "Who of those here is the one who does not care about the big picture? Because I considered the fact that we share the same surname of Ling, there were some things that I did not bring out into the open, yet you all bully my son in this manner. Do you really think I, Ling Dong Xing, am already dead?"

"Enough, if you're going to engage in a family squabble, then have your argument at home. I'm a very busy man," Ma Da Jun interrupted. "Quickly make this brat kneel down in front of me in

apology."

"Ma Da Jun, who are you asking to kneel?" Ling Han finally opened his mouth as he asked calmly.

Ma Da Jun?

At first, Ling Zhong and Ling Mu Yun were both shocked, thinking secretly that Ling Han was really gutsy to actually call Alchemist Ma directly by his name. Yet immediately, they looked extremely pleased--Ling Han had completely offended Ma Da Jun now! Ling Dong Xing and his son were definitely finished!

'Haha, I knew that this brat would bring ruin to his father.'

"You trash, to actually call my master by his name directly, how dare you!" Ling Mu Yun immediately shouted. He definitely had to take advantage of such a grand opportunity to flatter Ma Da Jun.

However, he had not seen that Ma Da Jun's expression quickly turned ugly. He had even stood up from his seat immediately.

This voice--how could Ma Da Jun ever forget this voice?

"Kneel down--"

"Pa!"

Ling Mu Yun did not even manage to finish his words before seeing Ma Da Jun fly towards him like an arrow shot from a bow, raising his hand and giving him a heavy slap.

Ling Mu Yun was slapped utterly stupid. Even Ling Dong Xing and Ling Zhong Kuan had vacant expressions, staring blankly. If Ma Da Jun wanted to hit someone, then shouldn't he be slapping Ling Han? Why had he suddenly slap Ling Mu Yun instead?

There must be some kind of mistake!

"Ma, Master!" Ling Mu Yun's expression practically screamed that he felt wronged. Why was he suddenly hit?

Under the three observers' uncomprehending stares, Ma Da Jun

quickly raced to stand in front of Ling Han. Bowing, he lowered his head respectfully as if he was an obedient little lackey and said, "So the noble guest today was Young Master Han. Please forgive my blindness for not managing to notice Young Master Han just now."

Although he had suffered a great deal because of Ling Han, he had had no idea what his name was--Zhu He Xin naturally had no need to explain anything to him.

What? What?

The other three members of the Ling Clan all entered into "petrified" mode. Was this really the extremely arrogant, high and mighty Alchemist Ma from just moments ago? Why did they suddenly feel like he had become a pug dog? Furthermore, why did he address Ling Han 'Young Master Han'?

Although Ma Da Jun's actual cultivation level could not be considered very high, he was an alchemist.

And an alchemist always commanded great respect and dignity!

The other three felt as if they had been petrified. They could not believe what they were seeing and hearing at all.

"This is your disciple? How overbearing!" Ling Han said, looking at Ling Han. His tone was extremely serene.

However, Ma Da Jun was shocked half to death. Once more, he gave another solid slap to Ling Mu Yun, and said, "Who do you think you are, to actually be so impolite to Young Master Han? I have no such disciple. From now onwards, do not address me as your master."

Ling Mu Yun immediately put on an expression of disbelief. He had been chased out? Just because of one word from Ling Han?

He recalled that Ling Han had just told him that he would never become an alchemist. Those words actually came true!

"No, Master, please do not chase me away, please give me another

chance!" Ling Mu Yun pleaded earnestly, quickly throwing himself to Ma Da Jun's feet.

He was not a martial arts genius, and had even lost the chance to enroll at Hu Yang Academy. Thus, becoming an alchemist was his last chance. Otherwise, he would have to be just like his father and grandfather. The strongest he could become would only be Element Gathering Tier, and he'd have a certain status only in the very small, very remote Gray Cloud Town.

"Get lost, you dared to be impolite to Young Master Han! I was already being merciful by not killing you, and you actually fancy that you are going to be an alchemist?" Ma Da Jun snorted. Even Zhu He Xin, Grandmaster Zhu, was extremely respectful facing Ling Han. If he knew that Ling Mu Yun actually dared to take such an attitude towards Ling Han, he may even rush over here to kill this brat with his own hands!

And with one word from Grandmaster Zhu, which alchemist in the whole of Rain Country would dare to take Ling Mu Yun as a disciple?

Ling Mu Yun could not control the ashen expression on his face. He was dazed, looking as if he had lost his soul.

"Let's go!" Ling Zhong Kuan took hold of his grandson. He knew there was no use saying anything now--it was better for them to leave before they embarrass themselves further.

"No! I'm an alchemist's apprentice, I will become an alchemist in the future!" Ling Mu Yun struggled with all his might, as if he had gone mad. But Ling Zhong Kuan held him tightly. Those still remaining in the private room could only hear the screams getting farther and farther away before they finally disappeared.

In the private room, Ling Dong Xing looked dumbstruck, while Ma Da Jun was drenched in cold sweat. He did not know if he had managed to soothe Ling Han's anger. He really dared not offend this young master.

"Just now, you were quite fierce facing my father," Ling Han said calmly, yet there was a strong dissatisfaction in his voice.

"Young Master Han, I had no idea just now that Ling Clan Head was your father. Otherwise, I would never dare to put on airs in front of Ling Clan Head!" He spoke with a pained expression, "I deserve death, I really am worthless!"

He strengthened his resolve, and actually started to slap himself repeatedly!

Chapter 25: Countering the Cheng Clan

Ling Dong Xing was already completely numb.

He knew that his own son was a genius now. But to actually be someone whom an alchemist would fawn on and painstakingly curry favor with... this still caused him to be incomparably shocked!

Before, Ma Da Jun's attitude was one full of arrogance, superiority and condescending. He had invited Ma Da Jun repeatedly before the man finally agreed to come, and yet the first thing the latter did upon coming was to seek flaws and create problems. He had truly displayed the arrogance of an alchemist to the full extent.

But now... he really dared not believe that Ma Da Jun would actually treat him with such respect and courtesy.

These few days that he was gone... what had actually happened to cause his son to change so much?

"Ling Clan Head, I truly deserve death. Please do not worry, I shall have someone deliver the medicine to you as soon as I return," Ma Da Jun said very gently and cautiously. Once he recalled his previous attitude towards Ling Dong Xing, he could not control the rapid beating of his heart. He was scared half to death now.

Ling Han tapped one finger on the table, and said, "Is it the Cheng Clan that had you do such a thing?"

"Hehe, Young Master Han, I really didn't know that Ling Clan Head was your father, and so fell under the deception of the Cheng Clan. You must believe me!" Ma Da Jun explained hurriedly.

Ling Han smiled and said, "I believe you."

Ma Da Jun immediately felt elated, but then he heard Ling Han continue to speak, "You're a greedy man. Going by your

personality and character, how could you actually deign to help the Cheng Clan without sufficient benefits? Tell me then, what benefits have you received from the Cheng Clan?"

"This—" Ma Da Jun stuttered, but once he saw Ling Han's sharp gaze, he tensed up and hurriedly said, "Thirty thousand silver coins."

"The Cheng Clan is really generous!" Ling Dong Xing snorted. As the head of clan, he had a deep understanding of the significance of thirty thousand silver coins.

The Cheng Clan and the Ling Clan were very similar in that they both had shockingly large income yet their spending was also extremely large. A sum of thirty thousand silver coins could only be painstakingly saved up over two, three years' time. That the Cheng Clan was willing to use such an astronomical sum to hire Ma Da Jun meant they were completely serious in their attempt to utterly cut off the Ling Clan's lifeblood.

Just as Ling Han said, Ma Da Jun was a greedy man. To let him once again supply Ling Clan with medicine, they would have to offer him a reward that exceeded thirty thousand silver coins. But the problem was that after the Ling Clan had been hit twice, they had practically expended all money they had available, so where would they be able to find thirty thousand silver coins to bribe Ma Da Jun with?

This move may have been only a little wound to the Cheng Clan, but for the Ling Clan, it would definitely be a fatal injury.

Thank goodness he had a good son!

Ling Dong Xing could not help smiling. The Cheng Clan would never have thought that the thirty thousand silver coins they had handed over was practically wasted.

"Thirty thousand coins, that's quite a lot," Ling Han looked at Ma Da Jun with a faint smile, "Alchemists really are quite expensive.

They had to spend such an amount to be able to bribe you."

"Young Master Han, you jest," Ma Da Jun wiped away the cold sweat beading on his forehead. He was not an idiot, so naturally he could tell that Ling Han was being sarcastic.

"Because of you, our Ling Clan really have suffered a huge loss these few days," Ling Han said serenely.

Ma Da Jun immediately shivered, but a flash of inspiration passed through his brain and he hurriedly said, "Although the mastermind is the Cheng Clan, it is undeniable that I too am responsible to some extent. Thus, allow me to hand over these thirty thousand silver coins to the Ling Clan to compensate for the losses the Ling Clan has suffered."

Ling Dong Xing was astounded. A man as greedy as Ma Da Jun would actually hand over the monetary bribe that he had long received? Just how terrified was he of his son!

Ling Han nodded, and said, "This isn't a problem for you, right?"

"How could it be?" Although he felt as if his heart was bleeding, Ma Da Jun was all smiles and said in embarrassment, "This is something I ought to do, and it is a small token of my feelings."

"All right then!" Ling Han nodded, "I need you to do something for me."

"Young Master Han, say it and it shall be done," Ma Da Jun pandered to him.

"From tomorrow onwards, have the portion of pills usually given to the Cheng Clan be supplied to our Ling Clan for resale," Ling Han said.

When Ling Dong Xing heard this, he immediately felt ecstatic. Alchemical pills were one of the two largest sources of income for the Ling Clan. If they could get double the amount of their supplies, then their profits would also double accordingly. At the same time, the income of the Cheng Clan would be halved.

Should this last for a few years, then the overall power of the Cheng Clan would soon fall very far from the power of the Ling Clan, while the Ling Clan... would be able to completely defeat the Cheng Clan and become the most important clan in Gray Cloud Town, and also the only Great Clan in the town!

"Yes, of course," Ma Da Jun replied quickly. After all, all he needed to do was to issue the necessary commands--he would suffer no personal loss on his part.

"I don't need to give you some kind of benefits in exchange?" Ling Han said with a smile.

"Hoho, Young Master Han, you're really such a joker," Ma Da Jun said with a dry laugh.

"All right, there's nothing else that I need you for so you can go on and do your job," Ling Han nodded, sending Ma Da Jun off.

"Why not have dinner first before leaving?" Ling Dong Xing said politely. After all, Ma Da Jun was going to do something for them.

Ma Da Jun naturally dared not stay. He hurriedly waved his hands and said, "No need, no need. I should go ahead and get to work," he raised his clasped hands towards Ling Han and then towards Ling Dong Xing while stepping backwards at the same time till he left the room.

"Han'er, wouldn't treating him in this manner backfire?" Ling Dong Xing said. After all, Ma Da Jun was still an alchemist. They didn't give him any kind of monetary benefits and Ling Han was even rude to him.

"Please don't worry, Father. That guy is the type that fears the strong and bullies the weak. Give him an inch and he'll take a mile," Ling Han said with a smile.

Ling Dong Xing did not ask Ling Han why Ma Da Jun had been so fearful of and respectful towards him. His son was already all grown up, and so he naturally had his own secrets. As a father, the

only thing he needed to do was to support him.

Moreover, he also had to start preparing for the next step. Now, it was time for their counterattack!

"Alchemist Ma!" Seeing Ma Da Jun come out, Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson emerged from the shadows, waving over at him.

The grandfather and grandson duo did not depart after they'd left the restaurant. Instead, they remained in wait here.

In front of Ling Han, Ma Da Jun acted like a pug dog. Yet in front of others, he immediately recovered his arrogant demeanor. He snorted, and said, "Do you have something to discuss with me?"

"Alchemist Ma, you see, Mu Yun and Ling Han are brothers of the same clan. Shouldn't you be more accommodating and allow Mu Yun to continue to learn alchemical arts with you?" Ling Zhong Kuan said with a flattering smile.

Yet Ma Da Jun only laughed, and said, "Chief Butler Ling, I cannot decide on this issue. If you want your grandson to become an alchemist in the future, then you must first obtain Young Master Han's approval! Otherwise, it's useless even if you find another alchemist. No one would dare to take your grandson as a disciple!"

'What!?'

Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson both wore an expression of utter disbelief. How could a mere piece of trash have such power?

"You can choose not to believe me, but this has nothing to do with me, so please do not drag me into this affair," Ma Da Jun waved his hand, "However, I will still offer you a word of advice--do not oppose Young Master Han on any account. Furthermore, you have no idea how fortunate you are!"

They were all members of Ling Clan. There was no such thing as

eternal enmity among family. As long as they sincerely apologized to Ling Dong Xing and his son, then how could it be that they would not receive any benefits in the future?

After all, Ling Han was a man that even Grandmaster Zhu, Zhu He Xin, treated with respect!

Chapter 26: News of Earth Dragon Grass

Just as Ma Da Jun had said, this matter had nothing to do with him, so once he said what he wanted to say, he quickly departed. He still had to complete the task that Ling Han had commanded him to do.

"Grandfather, are we really going to do as he had said and obey Ling Dong Xing and his son's commands without questions?" Ling Mu Yun asked, gritting his teeth. How could he resign himself to do such a thing? Ling Han was a well-known piece of trash, and for him to actually obey the commands of a piece of trash... just the mere thought of him made him feel stupid.

"Of course not!" Ling Zhong Kuan strongly waved his hand, "I've worked so hard all these years, how could I allow a piece of trash to ruin all my hard effort? Whether that brat is a real piece of trash or had just been pretending to be one, there is no way that he can stand in the way of me taking over our Ling Clan!"

"But Grandfather, what is our next move?" Ling Mu Yun appeared very dazed.

"Wait!" Ling Zhong Kuan said in a deep voice, "The relations between Cheng Clan and us are very tense now. Even though Ling Dong Xing can counterattack with Ma Da Jun's help, the Cheng Clan is not easily trifled with. Force them into a corner and they would definitely put their all into the fight."

"At that moment, we will give Ling Dong Xing an additional stab in the back, and shove him off the position of the clan head!"

Ling Mu Yun's face lit up upon hearing this, but his eyes were filled with a poisonous rage, "Grandfather, that brat Ling Han must be handed over to me, I want to kill him with my own hands!"

"You will definitely get your wish!" Ling Zhong Kuan said with a

cold smile.

The next morning, Zhu He Xin once again visited the Ling Clan. Now Ling Dong Xing finally understood why Ma Da Jun had been so reverent towards his son. It was because even a Black Grade alchemist such as Zhu He Xin would stand with both hands at his sides in front of his son--the epitome of an obedient student.

This solved the mystery yet caused Ling Dong Xing to be even more shocked. Because, in the last case, it was only a Yellow Grade alchemist, but now even a Black Grade alchemist was so reverent towards his son. What was going on here?

The reason behind Zhu He Xin's visit was to pass on some news to Ling Han.

There was news that a stalk of Earth Dragon Grass may have appeared on Seven Wind Mountains.

When Liu Yu Tong had gone to purchase the ingredients for concocting the Little Cloud and Water Pill a few days ago, she had also asked Zhu He Xin about the ingredients for another pill formula. This pill formula had a total of four ingredients that belonged to the 'extremely rare' category. Even Heaven's Medicine Pavilion did not have any of these ingredients in stock.

Or rather, the branch in Rain Country did not have them in stock. However, based on his current rank, Zhu He Xin had no way of checking the stock of the bigger branches, not to mention transferring something over.

This pill formula was the formula required to concoct a pill to heal Ling Dong Xing's Spirit Base. The name of the pill was "Restore Spirit Pill", an Earth Grade medium level pill!

Earth Dragon Grass was one of the four missing ingredients this pill formula required. Thus, once he received this piece of new, Zhu He Xin quickly came to personally visit the Ling Residence. Of

course, while one reason was to inform Ling Han of the important news, he also wanted to come and seek guidance from Ling Han. At other times, he would not dare to come and disturb Ling Han.

Ling Han was naturally elated. But after he had carefully asked about the circumstances surrounding the Seven Wind Mountains, he could only decide to temporarily postpone the trip.

The reason was, the person who brought the news was a strong warrior of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. By the time he was found by a team of herb gatherers, he was already close to death. He only managed to say "cave", "giant red snake" and "Earth Dragon Grass" before he died.

Thus, this led to the conclusion that there was Earth Dragon Grass within the Seven Wind Mountains, yet there should be a giant red snake standing guard over it. It even managed to severely injure a strong warrior of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

Yet Ling Han knew that where there was Earth Dragon Grass, there would usually be a Red Scaled Dragon Snake coiled nearby. The snake would absorb the weak Dragon Qi released by the Earth Dragon Grass to slowly evolve and complete the transformation from a snake to a dragon.

A mature Red Scaled Dragon Snake would possess cultivation comparable to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Furthermore, because it possessed a bit of the dragon's bloodline, its power far exceeded an ordinary warrior of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. It could be considered to have one foot in the Gushing Spring Tier and was an invincible king of the Element Gathering Tier.

Should Ling Han enter the Seven Wind Mountains at this stage... even if he managed to find that "cave", there was no way he could be an equal opponent to the Red Scaled Dragon Snake--it would be useless even with the help of Liu Yu Tong, unless Liu Yu Tong had

one foot in the Gushing Spring Tier as well.

He would definitely go to the Seven Wind Mountains, but he had to make full preparation for the trip.

Moreover, the inner core of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake could be refined into a Transcending Origin Pill. Taking this pill would allow a martial artist in the Element Gathering Tier to directly advance one layer--with the limit being the peak of the third layer of Element Gathering Tier. Additionally, because the Red Scaled Dragon Snake possessed a bit of the dragon's bloodline, its blood and flesh were extremely nutritious and would allow Ling Han to grasp the Dead Tree Tier, the first tier of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, at a faster rate.

He decided to continue working hard at cultivation and only set off towards Seven Wind Mountains once he had broken through to the Element Gathering Tier. He'd also be able to make use of the inner core of the Dragon Snake to quickly raise his cultivation level to the third layer of Element Gathering Tier then, after which he would easily break through to the fourth layer.

Additionally, he also had to raise his own power through actual battle experience and strengthen his foundation. While in his last life he had stood at the summit of martial arts, to be honest, he was not considered the one with the strongest battle power.

There was a simple reason for that. His cultivation progress was faster than an average cultivator's because he had possessed a Heaven Grade high level Spirit Base, but if he battled with a warrior of the same cultivation level, he would still have to take into account his opponent's battle tactics and the level of control he had over his use of martial arts skills.

In his last life, Ling Han was definitely extremely intelligent, for how else could he become the first Alchemy Emperor ever--a record that no one has ever managed to achieve and likely no one else will ever achieve? However, there were definitely limits to

one's time and energy. He had spent most of his time on alchemy research and concocting alchemical pills. Whatever time he had left he spent on raising his cultivation level, so how much time did he have left to refine his martial arts skills?

But this was no problem, for his cultivation progress was much too fast. With the additional support of alchemical pills, how could his opponents be able to compare with him? He only had to use the difference in cultivation levels to crush his opponents. He needed not use any kind of tactics.

But once he reached the summit of martial arts, this weakness was revealed.

In Ling Han's last life, there were in total seven strong warriors of the Heaven Tier. Based purely on actual battle power, he was definitely at the bottom. The reason was the fact that he had depended on the use of alchemical pills to increase his cultivation level and didn't really have much of an actual battle experience.

It could be said that his cultivation level of Heaven Tier had actually been quite hollow!

Of course, if he had spent more than one hundred years to continue training in martial arts skills, he would definitely be able to compensate for this inadequacy. After all, he was still too young. A three

hundred-year-old of the Heaven Tier was still a very rare existence in history--such people could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

In this life, Ling Han no longer wanted to become this kind of paper tiger warrior, so he definitely needed to leave a deep footprint behind his every step--each step had to be taken firmly.

Ling Han had no excess thoughts. Aside from cultivating the Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill everyday, he also began to refine his martial arts skills. In his last life, he had given up on using Yellow

Grade and Black Grade martial arts skills at a very early stage. He had mostly just stuck to using Heaven Grade martial arts skills, and only sometimes would he deign to use Earth Grade martial arts skills.

But now, he could only use Yellow Grade martial arts skills. As a result, he needed to work very hard on cultivating and make himself become an indomitable ruler of all those with the same cultivation level, and not just obtain his victories by taking advantage of the difference in cultivation level between him and his opponents.

However, he had in his hands a large variety of high-level martial art skills, but very few low-level ones.

That was natural. In his previous life, he had been a strong warrior of Heaven Tier. Even if he had discovered any Black Grade or Yellow Grade martial arts skills in a historical site, how would it be possible that he would train in any of them? He may flip through some of them, but there were definitely few of them.

Thankfully, he had also been a martial artist that had slowly worked his way up from the bottom in his last life, so he still possessed a few low-level martial arts skills.

Shocking Electricity Sword Arts, Flying Fire Palm Arts, Dashing Panther Fist, and Exiting Cloud Step were all Yellow Grade high level martial arts skills.

However, what caused Ling Han to feel a little embarrassed was the fact that he had not cultivated these four martial arts skills to the highest level in his last life, for he was always busy with concocting pills.

So, he just had to start all over again. He was still young anyways.

Ling Han began with Shocking Electricity Sword Arts. The reason was simple. His current cultivation level was still too low, so he needed the support of a weapon to increase his strength, and

the favorite weapon of most martial artists were either a sword or a saber.

Chapter 27: Sword Qi

Ling Han decided to head to Balance Mountain for training.

Balance Mountain was about eighty kilometers north of Gray Cloud Town. It was not a very large mountain. Even the continuous length and breadth of it measured just over one hundred kilometres. There were four towns within the mountain's vicinity, and their residents largely depended on the mountain for their livelihood.

The reason being, this mountain had both medicinal herbs as well as demonic beasts, and to a martial artist, both of these things were beneficial.

Unlike the gigantic mountain range that was the Seven Wind Mountains, where the demonic beasts were extremely powerful to the point that even strong warriors of the Spiritual Ocean Tier dared not venture too deeply, the strongest demonic beast in Balance Mountain was only in the Element Gathering Tier and could only be found in the innermost parts of the mountain range. Thus, as long as they did not venture too deeply into the mountain range, Balance Mountain was an excellent training grounds for a martial artist in the Body Refining Tier.

Ling Han knew very well that purely practicing would never let him train in a martial arts skill to the highest level. To achieve that, he had to experience actual battle!

Although Ling Dong Xing did not want his son to take risks, he also knew that it was impossible for a real martial artist to grow up protected like a plant in a greenhouse. Moreover, Liu Yu Tong would be by Ling Han's side to protect him, so naturally he did not need to worry that they would encounter some danger. Therefore, he agreed.

He was also very busy now. He was currently making preparations for the counterattack against the Cheng Clan while

also reorganizing the Ling Clan to regain power over the clan, which Ling Zhong Kuan had partially taken over these past few years.

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong very quickly began their journey, setting off towards Balance Mountain.

As Balance Mountain was quite close by, they did not need to bring too much baggage with them and had only brought two, three changes of clothing. Yet, even so, they still carried a sizable bundle, each.

This caused Ling Han to miss the spatial ring from his previous life.

A spatial ring seemed to be not much different from a normal ring, yet there was an incredible space within it that could accommodate a large number of items. If you were going on a trip, bringing a spatial ring along would be very convenient.

However, the method to create spatial rings was long lost with the passage of time, so there was only an extremely limited number available. In his last life, only a strong warrior of at least Flower Blossom Tier could possess one. Otherwise, even if you had very luckily obtained one, it would still bring a fatal disaster to you as its owner!

A spatial ring was something extremely valuable.

They traveled by foot. A distance of eighty kilometers was nothing much to a martial artist and they only spent about two hours on their journey. The two of them set off in the morning, and they had already entered the vicinity of Balance Mountain by noon.

They could hear the distant roars of tigers and cries of monkeys. As they looked everything over, a strongly fragrant, primitive, desolate air blew against their faces.

"Let's go!" Ling Han walked in front, and said, "As long as it's a

demonic beast in the Body Refining Tier, you don't have to do anything. Just leave it to me."

"Very well," Liu Yu Tong nodded.

However, Balance Mountain was not a place that was filled to the brim with demonic beasts. Although the two deliberately searched for them, they did not encounter even one. They didn't even encounter any ordinary wild beast. As the sky slowly darkened, the two of them began to feel hungry.

They had only brought a small amount of food as emergency rations. They had actually intended to hunt the demonic beasts on the mountain for food.

"We have to quickly hunt a demonic beast. Otherwise, we'll have to go hungry tonight," Ling Han said as he brandished the iron sword in his hand. He had bought the sword before he had departed for the journey. It was considerably expensive, being priced at ten silver coins. It would be enough against a demonic beast of Body Refining Tier, but against a demonic beast of Element Gathering Tier, it wouldn't even be able to break through its defense.

Moreover, he was not an equal opponent for a demonic beast in the Element Gathering Tier anyway.

Liu Yu Tong suddenly stopped walking.

"What is it, have you heard something?" Ling Han said with a bit of excitement.

"My shoelaces came undone," Liu Yu Tong crouched down.

He never imagined that this woman had a bit of a sense of humor. Ling Han shrugged and waited until Liu Yu Tong stood up. The two of them then continued their way forward. However, they had not walked too far before Liu Yu Tong once again crouched down.

"Your shoelaces came undone again?" Ling Han asked.

"No, I heard something!" Liu Yu Tong looked over in a particular direction. Her expression was still icy cold.

This woman definitely had a cold sense of humor.

Ling Han too glanced in the same direction. Liu Yu Tong was in the Element Gathering Tier, so her sight and hearing were much stronger than his. The shrubs in front of them were shaking, as if something was making its way out.

Very quickly, a gigantic wolf's head emerged, rapidly followed by the appearance of its body. It was about the size of a water buffalo and was blood-red in color, though its skin had several rotting scars scattered all over its body. It looked a little disgusting.

"Our luck's not bad, this is a Rotten Blood Wolf!" Ling Han's eyes lit up. Cultivating the Indestructible Heaven Scroll required various valuable materials to support his training, and the fresh blood of demonic beasts was currently the best material available, while the Rotten Blood Wolf could be considered as one of the strongest demonic beasts in the Body Refining Tier.

"Be careful!" Liu Yu Tong reminded. A mature Rotten Blood Wolf was a being in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. Other than that, demonic beasts always had a big advantage over humanity when it came to strength and defense, and that was the case even when a demonic beast and a human cultivator had similar cultivation.

The advantage of martial artists, on the other hand, was in the fact that they could use various martial arts skills and weapons to greatly increase their own power.

However, Ling Han was only in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier now. There was too big a gap between him and the Rotten Blood Wolf. Moreover, a martial artist could die at any moment in a battle against a demonic beast. The battle would not end even if you shout "Stop" or "I give up".

"Don't worry!" Ling Han smiled. Wielding the iron sword in his hand, his expression immediately became serious.

The Rotten Blood Wolf continuously released deep growls. In front of it stood two people. The man did not look very threatening to it, but the woman standing behind him caused the wolf to feel dread. However, due to the ferocious nature of a demonic beast, it was not willing to give up its prey.

The blood and flesh of demonic beasts were considered extremely nutritious to any martial artist, but martial artists were likewise a very nutritious meal to demonic beasts.

The Rotten Blood Wolf was very cautious. It did not attack right away.

"Yu Tong, step back," Ling Han said. Wolves were an extremely patient, very careful species. It must have sensed Liu Yu Tong's hidden strength.

Liu Yu Tong frowned faintly. Considering the current distance, she would be able to help him in time if he needed it. But if this distance increased, then should Ling Han encounter any danger, she might not be able to do anything to help him.

"Trust me," Ling Han smiled.

Liu Yu Tong finally stepped back slowly.

The Rotten Blood Wolf's ferocious nature was immediately roused. The claws of its front paws dug into the ground and its jaws opened, revealing two rows of sharp dagger-like teeth, exuding a cold air.

Ling Han crooked his finger, and said, "You big stupid dog, come, come, come!"

"Ao!" The Rotten Blood Wolf released a howl, pouncing abruptly at a very surprising speed.

Ling Han did not panic. With a wave of his long sword, the

Shocking Electricity Sword Arts had already been initiated.

"Shua!" Only one sword stabbed forward yet two flashes of cold light appeared. One of them was the sword itself, while the other was a white-colored energy.

"Sword Qi!" Liu Yu Tong could not help breathing out in shock.

Sword Qi was the symbol of a swordsman, just like a saber's wielder needed to have Saber Qi. It was incomparably sharp, and extremely powerful.

She had not formed Sword Qi yet she knew the difficulty of achieving it--she had an uncle who had been acclaimed as a genius in the art of the sword, yet he had only formed Sword Qi after five years of immersing himself in the path of the sword.

Was this guy really human?

Ling Han felt no surprise however. Forming Sword Qi was only a natural course of event, his goal was [Sword Ray](#)!

Sword Ray was the solid form of Sword Qi. Its power was even stronger. Unfortunately, he had not spent much time on sword arts in his last life so he had only formed Sword Qi, and did not manage to form Sword Ray.

The prerequisite for forming Sword Ray was that one thrust of the sword would have tens of flashes of Sword Qi, which then had to be condensed into Sword Ray. Just now, he had only managed to release one flash of Sword Qi. He still had a very long way to go.

The next step from Sword Ray was Sword Heart. This was the highest level one could achieve on the path of the sword.

However, against a Rotten Blood Wolf, one flash of Sword Qi was more than enough.

Ray refers to a kinda of sword-shaped aura, like it sometimes is in games. We took it too literally and hence mistranslated it before... I'll soon announce the term's change in later chapters.

Chapter 28: Green Spiritual Fruit

As the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts unfolded, Ling Han's long sword moved freely, his figure graceful.

Accompanying the display of Shocking Electricity Sword Arts was the Exiting Cloud Step. Every step was about four or five metres long, sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, suddenly forwards, suddenly backwards. His steps appeared strange and were extremely quick, becoming a blur to any observer's eyes.

Liu Yu Tong looked on from the side and could not help nodding her head in secret.

If she suppressed her cultivation level to the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, she would definitely not be able to perform as well as Ling Han. Rather, she would probably be facing danger from all sides by now. After all, there was a big difference in cultivation level between Ling Han and his opponent--two layers. Furthermore, the opponent was a demonic beast.

Normally, in a battle between a martial artist and a demonic beast, the martial artist needed to have a slight advantage in cultivation level to attain victory. If the cultivation levels of the martial artist and the demonic beast were about the same, then the martial artist had a higher chance of losing. After all, not every martial artist was a battle genius.

Ling Han's sword moves were becoming more and more fluid. His steps were natural and smooth as he enjoyed the pleasure of battling.

He had really put too much focus into the path of alchemy in his last life. In terms of martial arts, he used to care about cultivation level only. His whole "journey" upwards had just been a superficial understanding of martial arts. But this time, as he once again stepped onto the path of martial arts, he suddenly discovered that

martial arts could actually be very interesting too.

The Rotten Blood Wolf had become his sparring partner, allowing him to practice his moves to his heart's content, tempering his grasp of the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts.

Ten minutes later, the Rotten Blood Wolf was already covered with cuts and bruises. This caused it to become very fearful. This seemingly weak human was actually so powerful! It did not want to retreat, but it feared even more that not only would the two not become an offering to its fangs, but it itself would become a meal for these two humans.

"There's no escape!" Ling Han laughed loudly. The sword moved as he willed it to. Two flashes of Sword Qi were simultaneously released in between the glints of cold light.

Two flashes of Sword Qi! He had finally broke through!

"Pu!" Blood splattered as a crimson flower suddenly blossomed on the neck of the Rotten Blood Wolf. Its large body toppled over with a loud noise, its eyes open wide as if it still could not believe that a human at the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier would actually be able to kill it!

Demonic beasts had a very high level of intelligence. Powerful demonic beasts could even possibly have intelligence comparable to a human's.

Ling Han nodded. The power of two flashes of Sword Qi was indeed huge. Previously, one flash of Sword Qi only allowed him to fight on equal footing with the Rotten Blood Wolf, but two flashes allowed him to kill it in an instant! As expected, even if the cultivation level was the same, there could still be a large discrepancy in actual strength of different martial artists.

At the side, Liu Yu Tong was once again shocked into speechlessness.

Just this little bit of time, and Ling Han had improved from one

flash of Sword Qi to two. If that uncle of hers knew about this, wouldn't he be shamed to the point of jumping into a river and drown himself? As that uncle of hers had spent more than thirty years to form four flashes of Sword Qi, he was already acclaimed as a genius swordsman by the whole clan. But, when compared to Ling Han....

However, she did not know how far ahead Ling Han's starting line was, or how terrifying his comprehension ability was. Otherwise, how would he have been able to achieve Heaven Tier by two hundred years old in his last life?

"Dinner's settled!" Ling Han said with a smile.

The two of them found a small brook. Settling by the brook, they cleaned the body of the Rotten Blood Wolf. They naturally wouldn't waste the blood of a demonic beast and so poured all the blood into a pouch. Afterwards, Ling Han would bathe himself in the blood to absorb the essence of it to temper his own body.

They started a fire and cut off the wolf's leg for barbecue. After sprinkling some salt on it, a fragrant aroma very quickly wafted out.

There shouldn't be too many demands when on a trip out in the wilderness. After they had washed the wolf's leg with clean water from the brook and it had dried, the sky had already completely darkened. They did not continue their journey onwards. Instead, they both sat cross-legged by the brook and began cultivating.

Ling Han bathed himself in the blood of the demonic beast. He started to circulate Indestructible Heaven Scroll to extract the concentrated essence of the blood for his own use.

After merely slightly more than ten minutes, this dense, sticky beast's blood became watery and diluted. The essence within it was already completely spent.

'Like I thought... improving one's physique is truly quite

difficult!' Ling Han thought.

Let's use an example. If a martial artist in the Element Gathering Tier was consciously defending using Origin Power covering his body while being freely attacked by a martial artist of Body Refining Tier, it would be impossible for the latter to break through this layer of defense. However, if they didn't try to defend, the defense of a martial artist of Element Gathering Tier was not much stronger than a martial artist's of Body Refining Tier.

For instance, should a martial artist in Element Gathering Tier be ambushed by a martial artist in Body Refining Tier when asleep, then the chances were high that he would die due to his carelessness.

Meanwhile, strengthening one's physique would ensure that this defense would be a passive and permanent one, active even when asleep or unconscious. However, the strengthening of the physique was an extremely difficult task that required the expense of a large amount of valuable natural treasures.

Ling Han had been the previous type, and had not spent much effort on strengthening his physique in his last life.

Of course, the reason why the beast's blood could be refined so quickly was because the Indestructible Heaven Scroll was much too powerful and shockingly efficient. Otherwise, for other kinds of cultivation techniques like Stone Skin Skill, it might require about three or four days' time to be completely refined.

Ling Han could clearly feel that his muscles had become denser and his skin tougher. If a sharp piece of rock was drawn over his skin, the most it would do would be leaving behind a white mark.

Very soon, he should be able to achieve the physique of Dead Tree Tier.

After the night had passed, the two of them continued their journey on the mountain, seeking demonic beasts to battle.

From the second day onwards, it seemed as if their luck had taken a turn for the better as they continuously encountered demonic beasts. This did not just provide Ling Han with a very good chance for accumulating actual battle experience, but also provided him with a large supply of beasts' blood, allowing him to continuously advance in his cultivation of Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

On the fourth day, they exited the forest and saw five people sitting in a clearing not too far ahead. The five of them looked as if they had gone through a huge battle, every one of them looking quite miserable.

These five were all youngsters, all of them less than twenty years old. Three of the group had achieved the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier while the other two were in the eighth layer. In a small place like Gray Cloud Town, based on their individual cultivation level, the five of them could definitely be praised as geniuses.

Liu Yu Tong immediately took out a veil to conceal her face. She was born too beautiful and her unworldly beauty easily caused problems--though she herself had no fear of such problems.

"Brother, which town are you from?" One of the young men asked. His tone was filled with confidence, hinting that he should be from some large, wealthy clan.

Ling Han smiled, and said, "Gray Cloud Town."

"We're all from [Guo Rock Town](#)," That young man continued to say, and began to introduce his group, "I am Liu Dong, he's Chen Peng Ju, he's Li Hao, that guy's Zhou Chang, and this beauty here is Zhu Xue, the noble Miss Zhu."

Ling Han nodded at the five of them, and said, "I'm Ling Han, and this here is Liu Yu Tong."

"Ling Han, we discovered a Green Spiritual Fruit just now, yet

there is a very powerful demonic beast standing guard nearby, so we have no way of getting to it. How about it, are you interested in working together with us?" Liu Dong suggested to Ling Han. The reason behind his friendly attitude was revealed by his words.

"Oh?" Ling Han's heart stirred. A Green Spiritual Fruit would not only improve the cultivation level of a martial artist, it was also very beneficial for a martial artist preparing to break through to the Element Gathering Tier. The five people in front of him were very close to achieving the peak of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. Should they consume a Green Spiritual Fruit at this stage, it would be extremely helpful to their breakthrough.

Spiritual Fruits were different from alchemical pills. They were completely natural treasures, so consuming them had no side effects, unlike how it was the case with alchemical pills--if one were to continuously take alchemical pills, traces of poisonous impurities present in alchemical pills would accumulate within their body. However, there were some Spiritual Fruits that possessed effects so strong that they had to be refined into pills before they could be consumed. Otherwise, it would be the same as committing suicide.

"What level is that demonic beast?" Ling Han asked.

"Miasma Cloud Beast, ninth layer of Body Refining Tier," Zhou Chang replied.

Ling Han suddenly understood why even these five people were powerless. As the Miasma Cloud Beast would continuously release large amounts of poisonous miasma during battle, fighters had to hold their breath. However, in a violent battle, even for a martial artist, how long would they be able to hold their breath for?

Thus, without crushing power to end the battle in a very short period of time, there would be no way to defeat a Miasma Cloud Beast.

"However, you must first receive a saber attack from me to prove

that you possess sufficient strength," Li Hao spoke and brandished the saber in his hand, his face showing a very cool expression, fully intent on showing off.

Guo = outer city wall.

Chapter 29: Take a Saber Attack From Me

"You have to be careful, he's in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. Furthermore, his nickname is Saber Maniac. He never jokes around when talking about sabers," Zhu Xue Yi cautioned, "If your cultivation level is not above the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, then it's better if you don't take his attacks head on."

Ling Han nodded with a smile, and said, "I only need to take one attack from you?"

"Just one!" Li Hao continued to say very coolly and arrogantly, looking like some kind of master swordsman.

"Very well, come on then," Ling Han did not boast of his own abilities, nor did he display any disdain towards his opponent. He only nodded very calmly in response.

Li Hao moved and arrived in front of Ling Han. His right hand was placed on the hilt of the saber at his waist, but he made no move to draw it out yet. His left foot was in front while his right foot remained at the back. His upper body leaned slightly forwards, his expression one of complete concentration.

Ling Han was slightly surprised--this guy actually looked a little decent, and vaguely had the bearing of a swordsman.

Li Hao drew his saber abruptly, and a flash of cold light blazed and slashed swiftly towards Ling Han.

"Ding!"

A sharp sound echoed and sparks flew. Ling Han managed to draw his sword in time, scraping it against the blade of the saber. However, the long sword did not go against the saber head on. Instead, it drew all the way from the saber's tip right to the saber's hilt and in this way managed to dissipate the heavy weight of the saber.

The sword's movement was extremely quick!

Li Hao's saber attack was unexpectedly ended.

Zhu Xue Yi and the rest of her companions were all shocked. The power Ling Han displayed in this one strike was obviously only the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, yet he managed to dissolve Li Hao's full-power slash, exhibiting more than exceptional sword skills.

"You pass," Li Hao nodded, a very arrogant expression on his face.

Yet Ling Han gave a flick of his long sword, and said, "You too should take an attack from me!"

"Haha, are you testing me?" Li Hao gave a big laugh. Although Ling Han managed to take a saber attack from him, this did not signify that he would be able to fight on even footing with him. These were completely two different issues.

"Something like that," Ling Han said with a smile. "Do you dare?"

"Then bring it on!" Li Hao said confidently. When they exchanged blows previously, he had confirmed that Ling Han's cultivation level was only in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. Although the two of them were both similarly in the late stage of Body Refining Tier, the difference of two layers was still very distinct.

The sword in Ling Han's hand moved in an elaborate manner and suddenly pierced forwards, aiming directly at Li Hao's neck.

Li Hao naturally did not fear Ling Han's attack. He brandished his saber in a block. With a "ding", the long sword stopped its approach right in front of his throat, missing by a hair's breadth.

"You've lost," Ling Han withdrew his sword.

"I clearly blocked your—" Li Hao was just about to speak, when he saw that Ling Han gave a flick of his sword, and a ray of white-colored cold light flashed swiftly.

"Sword Qi!" Liu Dong and his company simultaneously gasped in shock.

Li Hao could not help the darkening of his expression. He naturally knew the power of Sword Qi, so he nodded and said, "I've lost!" If Ling Han had released Sword Qi just now, then he currently would only be a dead body.

Liu Dong and company were shocked half to death. The fact that Ling Han had managed to parry Li Hao's saber previously had already made them feel very impressed. But now this was actually a guy who had even formed Sword Qi... he really was inconceivable.

Li Hao's fighting spirit rose again, and said, "Let us spar once more!" He had not yet experienced a battle with someone who could form Sword Qi. This was a rare opportunity.

"Very well!" Ling Han nodded in agreement. He had a slight intent to train Li Hao as he thought that this brat would be able to step onto the path of an actual swordsman. As he spoke, his right hand flicked, and his long sword once again flashed out.

Li Hao naturally would give it his best, and hurriedly brandished his saber in a slash. He wanted to use the weight of the saber to force Ling Han to fly out of the spar. He opted to attack instead of pure defense.

"Ding, ding, ding, ding," the two fighters battled fiercely. Li Hao was not "instantly killed" this round. However, he suffered quite a bit as Ling Han had started to use Sword Qi, which left many wounds on Li Hao's body.

Tens of moves later, Li Hao decisively surrendered. If they continued to battle, he might really bleed to death.

"Sword Qi is indeed powerful!" He said, both frustrated and excited. Should he be able to form Saber Qi, then the situation might be completely different.

"Do not be discouraged, you are already quite skilled," Ling Han said aptly.

Although he had not spent much time on sword arts in his last life, how intelligent was he? Moreover, he had once achieved the summit of Heaven Tier. His one day's training would be comparable to a year's training of a person in Body Refining Tier... or even a few years' training!

Just how old was Li Hao that he could actually spar with him?

Zhu Xue Yi and company were both shocked and overjoyed. Their shock was due to the fact that Li Hao was the strongest amongst them yet was still unfit to be Ling Han's opponent. Their joy was because their chances of obtaining the Green Spiritual Fruit had increased greatly now with the help of such a master swordsman.

The group of seven set off on their way to where the Green Spiritual Fruit was located.

"So it seems that Brother Ling is the heir to the Ling Clan of Gray Cloud Town. That's strange, we should have long heard of a genius existence like Brother Ling," on the way to their destination, Ling Han had become the focus of the five young people's attention, and so naturally was barraged by their questions.

This was normal--his predecessor had no idea that he had possessed an Immortal Grade Spirit Base, neither did he know the Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill. It'd be strange if he was well-known.

Ling Han only answered that he had been more subdued in the past, and thus deflected this question.

Though Zhu Xue Yi and her companions also had much interest in Liu Yu Tong, she was icily silent all the while, and Ling Han too did not seem like he was going to introduce her, thus they could only feel curious in their hearts.

Close to an hour later, they finally arrived at an extremely moist place. In front of them, there suddenly appeared a cave. They hadn't even entered the cave yet but could already smell a disgusting stink. However, they could vaguely see a plant that was about a meter tall--its stem had no leaves, looking like a sugarcane. However, there hung several fruits from it, neither too many nor too few--exactly seven of them.

"If we go any closer, we'd be affected by the miasma poison. We must hold our breaths if we want to advance forwards."

"That Miasma Cloud Beast is very cunning, it would definitely not leave the sphere of influence of the miasma poison."

"We have to draw that Miasma Cloud Beast out. As long as we can obstruct it for a few breaths' time, we'll be able to extract the Spiritual Fruits."

"Miss Liu and Xue Yi will be responsible for extracting the Green Spiritual Fruits. Us five men will be in charge of obstructing the Miasma Cloud Beast. Agreed?"

This was mostly directed at Ling Han.

They would both have one person on the team obtain the fruits to avoid either party snatching the fruits and fleeing.

Ling Han smiled and nodded. If they knew what Liu Yu Tong's cultivation level was, then they probably might not offer this kind of suggestion.

"We have to draw the Miasma Cloud Beast out first. If we start the battle in the cave, then we would not be able to take advantage of our superior numbers," Zhou Chang said.

"En!"

The five men all drew out their respective weapons, banging them against each other to create a clamor.

It took only a while before a creature which looked similar to a

wild hog ran out of the cave. There were air sacs all over its body that kept on releasing a gray fog. Two long, thick fangs protruded outside its lips, looking like two short spears, exuding a strong pressure.

This was the Miasma Cloud Beast. With its power, it could be considered to be in the upper echelons of the Body Refining Tier's demonic beasts.

The Miasma Cloud Beast appeared at the cave entrance, yet it did not attack. It only growled deeply and bared its teeth at the five humans in front of it. The air sacs all over its body continuously released a gray fog, forming a dark cloud above it.

"Let's go!" Zhou Chang gave a loud shout and made the first move. Liu Dong, Chen Peng Ju and Li Hao followed closely behind. The four of them simultaneously brandished their respective weapons and flew towards the Miasma Cloud Beast.

However, Ling Han made no movement. Instead, he stayed behind, silently watching.

Four against one... although Li Hao and his companions had the advantage in numbers, under the continuous influence of the poisonous miasma, they could not display their full prowess and very quickly were on the losing side.

They could not help feeling very worried--hadn't they made an agreement to join forces and attack together? Why was Ling Han just standing there by the side and watching?

"Shua!" Right at that moment, Ling Han drew his sword quickly, as if he was moving at the speed of light.

Chapter 30: Hang Zhan Who Charged Out Midway

This sword move was really very cleverly timed as the Miasma Cloud Beast had just defended against the combined attacks of Liu Dong and his companions and its defense had weakened, creating an opportunity for Ling Han.

"Shua!" The long sword waved, seemingly like a deity descended from the heavens.

With a "pu" sound, the sword pierced through the right eye of the Miasma Cloud Beast and deeper into its body, driving in all the way until the hilt.

"Peng!" The Miasma Cloud Beast fell heavily onto the ground. It was actually killed in one blow!

"What!"

"Mother!"

"Si!"

Liu Dong and the others, including Zhu Xue Yi who had been in hiding, inhaled sharply in shock.

That was an actual Miasma Cloud Beast, one of the strongest amongst demonic beasts in Body Refining Tier! And yet, it was killed in one blow! How could they accept something this unbelievable?

But immediately, they took to their heels. If one spoke, they would naturally inhale air. They had all inhaled a bit of miasma poison just now, thus they had to circulate their respective cultivation techniques as soon as possible to dissolve the poison. Otherwise, their internal organs could very likely corrode.

After a while, Liu Dong was the first to walk towards Ling Han, and patting his shoulder, he said, "I thought you brat were already

scared to the point that you couldn't move, but you're actually so strong. Your one strike could actually be so swift."

"Haha, Brother Ling is truly powerful to actually kill the Miasma Cloud Beast in one blow!" Li Hao said. To be able to witness such a clean, decisive slash, he too felt immeasurably excited since he was a swordsman himself.

Ling Han only smiled. The lower the cultivation level, the easier it would be for one with a lower cultivation level to challenge someone with a higher cultivation level. Moreover, the Miasma Cloud Beast had had most of its attention focused on Liu Dong and the rest just now, which gave him the chance to kill it in one strike.

If it was a one-on-one battle, Ling Han would definitely not be able to fight the Miasma Cloud Beast on even grounds--unless he had taken the antidote to the miasma poison beforehand.

After the miasma poison had dissipated, they plucked the Green Spiritual Fruits one by one, but did not damage the plant itself.

The plan they came up with just now was because they were short on time, and so could only choose to uproot the plant. But now that the Miasma Cloud Beast was dead, they naturally had no need to do such a thing. This after all was a natural spiritual medicine. Damaging it would equal damaging the harmony of nature.

Seven Green Spiritual Fruits--they each could obtain one. However, though Liu Yu Tong had put hers away, she would definitely hand it over to Ling Han later.

"Heng, leave the spiritual fruits behind!" They heard a cold voice speak. Two men walked over to them, one in front while the other remaining behind. One was young while the other was old. The younger one seemed to be about twenty plus years old, while the older man appeared to be about seventy or eighty years old, with a head full of white hair.

The speaker was the young man. He was walking in front while the old man followed him from behind like a servant.

Ling Han glanced at the approaching pair. With the insight of a warrior in Heaven Tier, he could immediately tell that the young man was in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier while the old man had already reached the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier!

"Who do you think you are to be so arrogant?" Liu Dong immediately stood, yelling at the unknown young man.

However, that young man's gaze swept over Zhu Xue Yi's dainty figure and beautiful face, revealing a covetous expression. Then, he disdainfully said, "You don't even know I, Hang Zhan? Hehe, then you should have heard of Stone Wolf Sect, right? I am the eldest grandson of the Seventh Elder of Stone Wolf Sect!"

Stone Wolf Sect!

Hearing these three words, the expressions on the faces of Liu Dong and the others all changed into ones filled with dread.

In Rain Country, one couldn't casually proclaim themselves a sect or a faction. Faction, Sect, Association, and Society--from highest to lowest, these were the four different levels. Only a party that possessed a warrior of the Spiritual Ocean Tier could claim to be a Faction, one with a master in the Gushing Spring Tier could be proclaimed a Sect... a party that only had a warrior in Element Gathering Tier could be claimed as Association, while Society would be those in the lowest category.

The Stone Wolf Sect was the greatest party within one thousand miles. According to rumors, the Nine Great Elders were all warriors in the Gushing Spring Tier, while the Sect Master was an individual standing at the pinnacle of the ninth layer of Gushing Spring Tier.

If this Hang Zhan was telling the truth and his grandfather really

was the Seventh Elder of the Stone Wolf Gate, then he indeed had a terrifying background.

"Hahahaha, now do you know who I am? Leave the Spiritual Fruits and all of you break one of your arms, then you can get lost! However, these two girls must stay behind!" Hang Zhan once again looked at Liu Yu Tong. Although he could not see her face, her graceful figure still caused his heart to throb.

With his rich experience of encounters with women, this girl definitely had to be a beauty.

Liu Dong and his fellows were extremely furious. They could leave behind the Spiritual Fruits, but to actually have each of them break one of their arms? Should a martial artist break his own arm, that would be the same as destroying his own future! Zhu Xue Yi shivered. She knew why he wanted her to stay behind, and this made her feel disgusted, furious and fearful, all at the same time.

"Do you still intend to resist me?" Hang Zhan smiled coldly, "Elder Yu, make them feel despair!"

"Yes, Young Master!" The white-haired old man behind him replied respectfully before slowly walking over to them.

He originally had a bent figure, being the embodiment of a senile old man. Yet now, his back straightened a bit with each step and his aura kept increasing, quickly causing Liu Dong and the others to pale.

Ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier!

In truth, Liu Dong and the others could not tell what "Elder Yu"'s cultivation level was. They only knew that he was much, much stronger--stronger than them by a large margin. But no matter what layer of Element Gathering Tier he was at, to suppress a few youngsters in Body Refining Tier would be as easy as flipping his hand over.

They were finished!

Liu Dong and the others looked ashen. Although they were extremely unwilling, they could not help but admit that their backgrounds could not compare with the newcomer's. As for comparing their own strength with their opponents', they were also unable to do so.

"You, take off your veil!" Hang Zhan said, pointing at Liu Yu Tong. The more he stared at Liu Yu Tong's figure, the more the fire in his heart blazed and the more he wanted to see her true face.

Should Liu Yu Tong's true appearance not reach his expectations, he would definitely kill her in one strike for making him expect this much for nothing.

Consequences?

Hang Zhan naturally never thought about such a thing. The Stone Wolf Sect was the king in this area. As long as they did nothing treasonous towards Rain Country, then so what if he killed a few people?

Liu Yu Tong naturally would not even bother to respond.

"En? Did you not hear me?" Hang Zhan was a little upset. He was used to being arrogant and bossy; the thing that infuriated him the most was if someone dared to disobey his commands.

Liu Yu Tong looked at Ling Han. After seeing the smile plastered all over Ling Han's face, she then slowly reached towards her veil and calmly took it off.

In an instant, it was as if their whole surroundings lit up.

How could there be such a beautiful girl in this world?

What an outstanding beauty... how devastatingly beautiful! Though her demeanor was as cold as an iceberg, it caused one to have an even stronger desire to conquer her. To be able to have this beauty become a charming pet at his knee, what sense of accomplishment would that be?

Liu Dong and the rest were amazed to the point of losing their breath first, but then immediately felt pity, for this kind of outstanding beauty was about to fall into the hands of Hang Zhan.

Hang Zhan naturally was extremely surprised and joyous. He had never imagined that he would actually encounter such a beauty; his eyes were wide to the point that they seemed as if they were about to pop out. He laughed loudly and said, "Beauty, come here!"

"Be careful, Young Master, she's in the Element Gathering Tier!" Elder Yu suddenly spoke up, his wrinkled face filled with utmost seriousness.

He could not tell this woman's actual power!

It was possible to see the cultivation level of someone with lower cultivation than oneself, but this required both parties to be at a close enough distance. Just like Elder Yu--he was far beneath Liu Yu Tong in power, so he could only identify that Liu Yu Tong's cultivation level had already reached the Element Gathering Tier, but could not tell exactly what her cultivation level was.

Liu Dong and his group, as well as Hang Zhan, all experienced a great shock, displaying expressions of complete disbelief.

Chapter 31: Bow Your Head and Apologize

This woman could only be eighteen or nineteen years old at most, yet she had already reached Element Gathering Tier?

But how was it possible that a strong warrior of Element Gathering Tier would actually spout nonsense?

Hang Zhan was shocked for a moment, before quickly giving a "humph" in his heart--so what if she was at Element Gathering Tier? At this age, she could only have just broken through, how would it be possible that she could oppose Elder Yu?

"Elder Yu, take her down!" The lust in Hang Zhan's heart was fully active. Being a cultivator in the Body Refining Tier, to be able to hold down a master in the Element Gathering Tier underneath his body and toy with her, his sense of fulfillment would be overwhelmingly strong--particularly when this girl was of such exquisite beauty.

He was very close to being unable to hold himself back.

Although Elder Yu had a cautious expression on his face, he too did not think of Liu Yu Tong as a powerful enemy. After all, the girl was much too young. According to his mindset, the girl may be in the first or second layer in Element Gathering Tier... maybe the third layer, at most.

He was someone in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Although it was not possible for him to break through to the Gushing Spring Tier in this lifetime, but on the plane of Element Gathering Tier, he found few who could actually battle against him on even footing.

"Young miss, surrender obediently to avoid suffering later," he spoke up.

Killing intent flashed through Liu Yu Tong's eyes. She was the princess of the Liu Clan. In front of the Eight Great Clans of the

Imperial City, what did a mere Stone Wolf Sect count as? This Hang Zhan actually dared to bear evil intentions towards her, it seemed like he really was seeking death.

But when her current position came to mind, she could not help turning to look at Ling Han, a questioning look on her face.

Ling Han gave a shrug, and said, "This kind of bastard, if you want to kill him, then go ahead."

Liu Yu Tong turned back around, and the powerful aura of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier was released without any reservations-- it rivaled Elder Yu's aura, and showed no signs of losing.

"What!" Elder Yu quickly paled, breathing out in shock, "Ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, how is this possible!"

Ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier?

Elder Yu was not the only one to be greatly shocked. Even Liu Dong and his group were flabbergasted, their facial muscles twitching in shock.

Let alone reaching the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, for someone below twenty years old to achieve Element Gathering Tier was already shocking enough! Liu Dong and his friends had originally thought that even if there was a gap between themselves and Liu Yu Tong, this gap wouldn't be too far, because they too had already achieved the eighth and ninth layers of Body Refining Tier respectively and so were only one step away from breaking through to Element Gathering Tier.

But the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier.... that was a kind of power they only dared to ponder about as something they would only be able to face at least eight, or maybe even ten years later.

Elder Yu immediately clasped his fists in a polite gesture, and said, "Please excuse my Young Master's previous impoliteness, Young Miss. I hereby apologize on behalf of my Young Master!"

Although both of them were in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier and he thought that he would not lose against this young woman, the problem was that his opponent had already reached the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier at such a young age, and this was not something that could be done with the support of any ordinary party.

In other words, it was her background Elder Yu was scared of.

Although Hang Zhan felt upset, and was unwilling to give up, there was nothing he could do. Even if he was an extremely haughty, arrogant man, he wasn't an idiot. He knew that there were some people that he could trifle with, and there were some people that he definitely should not even think of messing with.

Liu Yu Tong belonged to the category of those he definitely should not even think of messing with.

Liu Yu Tong only gave a wave of her hands, and said stiffly, "I won't kill you, get out of my way!"

What a joke, how could anyone think of committing blasphemy against the princess of the Liu Clan and live!

"Miss, don't go too far!" Elder Yu said in a deep voice. Naturally, he would not just stand aside and watch Hang Zhan die.

Liu Yu Tong did not answer. She raised her hands in an offensive stance.

Yellow Grade high level martial arts skill, Snapping of the Plum Hands.

Seeing this, Elder Yu knew that this matter could not be peacefully settled, so raised his hands as well, forming claws.

"Yellow Grade medium level martial arts skill, Flying Eagle Claws!" Liu Dong declared. He was best at claw skills, and so knew the characteristics of many different skills belonging to that class. With one glance, he managed to identify Elder Yu's claw skill.

"Ling Han, will that one from your family have any problems?" The five of them had already gathered around Ling Han. Liu Yu Tong was now their only ray of hope.

Ling Han smiled softly, and said, "She should not."

Should not?

Liu Dong and his companions were all unsettled. "Should not" sounded very dubious, but both of the fighters were in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so really, who could actually say with certainty which one of them would emerge victorious?

While they had been conversing, Liu Yu Tong had already moved, and was now in a fierce battle with Elder Yu.

The two of them exchanged blows, their figures moving like wind--extremely quick.

The two fighters were both masters in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Liu Dong and his group couldn't clearly see their movements or judge the actual situation. They only felt the blurring of their sight, and had completely no idea who was winning.

Hang Zhan naturally couldn't see clearly either. He couldn't help feeling extremely anxious, for if Elder Yu was defeated, he would definitely lose his life as well. So, of course he was worried.

But after the battle had lasted for about three to five minutes, the movements of the two fighters had slowed down, not only to the point that Liu Dong and his group could all see very clearly, but also to the point that even they thought that the pace of the battle had become much too slow.

However, a hint of prudence appeared on Ling Han's face.

Slow did not mean that the two fighters were going easy on their attacks. On the contrary, the situation now was even more dangerous, for they had already entered a life-or-death stage. Should either of the two of them make even a small, tiny mistake,

the result would not just be defeat, but death.

He recalled that these few days, whenever he was free, he would be guiding Liu Yu Tong. Based on his previous cultivation of Heaven Tier, whatever little bit of experience he managed to pass on to a lower level martial artist would be extremely precious. As long as she had truly absorbed his teachings, there would definitely be a monumental increase in her power.

With Liu Yu Tong's level of comprehension, he believed that she should have understood much of what he had been teaching her.

This battle... she should be able to win.

Liu Yu Tong and Elder Yu's battle slowed down even further. One of them was an old master in the Element Gathering Tier who had been at this stage for a very long time, and thus had extremely vast battle experience. Meanwhile, though the other was young, she was a martial arts genius and had a very high level of comprehension. Moreover, she had also benefited much from Ling Han's guidance, and was shockingly powerful in battle.

Elder Yu's forehead was already heavily beaded with cold sweat. His opponent was too strong. He felt the oncoming pressure of death, but he dared not be distracted at this moment, not even to surrender and beg for mercy. If he dared pause, he would definitely suffer Liu Yu Tong's wrathful strike.

Liu Yu Tong, on the other hand, was becoming more and more serene. She was already completely on the winning side.

The situation was now extremely clear. Even Liu Dong and his group could see clearly that Liu Yu Tong was winning, so they smiled for they saw their worries dissipate. Since they could see clearly, Hang Zhan naturally could see clearly too. He could not help stepping back and retreating, preparing to escape at the first opportunity.

"You're in such a rush, where are you headed to?" Ling Han flew

forwards like an arrow shot from a bow, blocking his way.

"Get out of my way!" Hang Zhan shouted loudly, "I'm from the Stone Wolf Sect, and you dare to trifle with me? I'll slaughter your whole family!"

How overbearing!

Ling Han drew his sword, his gaze filled with murderous intent. There was nothing worth saying to such a man--the best thing would be to immediately kill him.

"Ling Han, don't be impulsive!" Liu Dong could not help shouting out. Should Hang Zhan be killed, none of their clans would be able to withstand the furious rage of the Stone Wolf Sect.

"Haha, listen to your companion's advise, and never oppose me! Otherwise, nothing but death awaits you!" Hang Zhan laughed coldly, "You're fortunate today!" He was just about ready to run away and escape.

However, he had not yet managed to move from his place when he felt a cool sensation on his neck--a long sword was already pressed against it, immediately causing his whole body to shiver. He felt as if he was almost going to urinate out of fear.

"There is no one that I dare not kill!" Ling Han said calmly, and his voice turned cold, "Kneel!"

Hang Zhan did not dare refuse. The freezing cold eyes of the man in front of him caused him to feel a cutting chill. This was clearly a man of his word.

"Apologize!" Ling Han continued to say.

Hang Zhan immediately felt the urge to stand up and spit out curses, but as he felt the freezing sensation upon his neck, he could only bow his head while thinking that as soon as he got back to the Stone Wolf Sect, he would definitely have his grandfather personally come to kill all these guys in front of him!

Of course, the two beautiful girls would be spared and become his toys instead.

"I was wrong, I'm inhumane!" He said, begging for mercy.

"I hope you will become a good person in your next life," Ling Han said coolly.

"No—" Hang Zhan immediately sensed the situation was taking a turn for the worse, but he only felt a sharp pain on his neck as his sight suddenly turned dark. Fresh blood spurted out, causing his eyes to go wide in disbelief--Ling Han actually dared to kill him!

At the same moment, Liu Yu Tong gave a soft cry--with a pat of her small hands, it was as if Elder Yu had turned into stone, showing no signs of movement at all. After a long while, his body finally collapsed onto the ground.

"This is going to be a huge catastrophe!" Liu Dong and the rest sighed in unison.

Chapter 32: Breaking Through to Element Gathering Tier

Ling Han withdrew his sword and said, smiling, "Will you tell anyone of what has happened here today?"

"Of course not!" Liu Dong and the rest quickly shook their heads.

"It's all right, then. None of us present here will say anything, so who would find out that Hang Zhan and his lackey died here?" Ling Han said.

However, Liu Dong and his companions were still unable to let go of their worries. After all, the name of "Stone Wolf Sect" was much too intimidating; based on its power, the sect could easily eliminate their respective clans a hundred times. With such feelings, they dared not linger here for too long, fearing that Ling Han would kill them too to ensure their silence. Moreover, they each possessed a Green Spiritual Fruit in their hands, adding on to the unsettled feelings in their hearts.

They soon bid farewell to Ling Han and set off, quickly disappearing from his sight.

Killing the eyewitnesses... Ling Han naturally had no such plan, for his little female attendant was the princess of the Liu Clan of the Imperial City. Against such a noble existence, what did an insignificant Hang Zhan count as? If the Stone Wolf Sect found out that Hang Zhan actually dared to bear evil intentions towards Liu Yu Tong, they might even personally behead Hang Zhan as an apology.

Just as how Liu Dong and his group felt immeasurable fear towards Stone Wolf Sect, what did an insignificant Stone Wolf Sect count as in the eyes of the Eight Great Clans?

'I'll take one Green Spiritual Fruit first. Once I reach the peak of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, I'll take the second one,' Ling

Han thought. Although he had already walked through all the nine tiers on his way from the Body Refining Tier all the way to the Heaven Tier, this did not imply that he could easily step over the gulf between the two tiers.

That was because, aside from the comprehension and understanding accumulated within a given tier, breaking through the bottlenecks between tiers was an endeavor that required a vast amount of energy to support it.

Where did this energy came from?

Spiritual medicine, alchemical pills, treasures obtained from demonic beasts, spiritual fluids found in nature could all be used as the source of this energy. Unfortunately, these materials were extremely rare and hard to find.

This was the reason why the higher the tier, the fewer martial artists there were that could achieve it. Without these kinds of supporting materials to provide the additional energy for martial artists to break through to a higher tier, the only thing they could do was depend on themselves to slowly accumulate the energy required for the breakthrough. Some would be able to succeed in breaking through, while some may cause themselves to explode from over-accumulation of energy.

If he had not had the Green Spiritual Fruit, Ling Han may have needed to accumulate about ten plus days worth of Origin Power to reach the peak of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, and then break through to the Element Gathering Tier in a spurt of energy. But things were different now. When he reached the barrier between Body Refining and Element Gathering Tier, Ling Han only needed to take the Green Spiritual Fruit, and it would be smooth sailing all the way.

Ling Han liberated all the valuables from the bodies of Hang Zhan and Elder Yu. Because the two of them had been on a journey, they obviously had not kept too many valuables on them,

so all he managed to find were some money and a book on some secret martial art.

The sum of money came up to a total of about one hundred thousand coins, which could not be considered a small sum. Meanwhile, the book was titled "Detonation Arts", and it was a rather unique skill. Basically, it allowed a martial artist to inject his Origin Power into something which would cause the item to detonate. It would be difficult for someone to defend against such a skill.

Elder Yu should have just obtained this secret arts manual and had yet to start mastering it. Otherwise, if Liu Yu Tong had been surprised with such an attack in the midst of battle, then she would definitely have suffered quite a bit.

The two of them moved to a new location. After all, there were two dead bodies in their previous location; just looking at the two corpses would spoil their mood.

Ling Han sat down in a cross-legged position. He then took out a Green Spiritual Fruit and washed it with a bit of clean water. Then, he quickly consumed it in large bites.

It really did deserve the name of a Spiritual Fruit born from nature. Even though its level couldn't really be considered high, it was still extremely delicious and, within a few bites, Ling Han had already finished eating it. He felt extremely dissatisfied, and really wanted to take out the other fruit and eat it too.

He quickly suppressed this impulsive urge, and quietly waited for the medicinal effects to play out.

In but a short moment, a powerful and intense medicinal effect was released, transforming into innumerable tiny particles, entering his bloodstream and spreading throughout his entire body.

Ling Han circulated Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill. The Spirit

Base in his Dantian gave out a shimmering light like a lotus flower of the Dao, guiding the medicinal effects to nourish every piece of flesh, every bone, and every vein in his body.

His cultivation rate was already very fast to begin with. Before he had consumed the Green Spiritual Fruit, he had already reached the middle period of the seventh layer. Now that he had obtained the support of the Spiritual Fruit, his progression rate was naturally even more terrifying.

The late period of the seventh layer of the Body Refining Tier... the peak of the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier!

He accumulated some Origin Power and, in one breath, broke through to the eighth layer of Body Refining Tier. At this time, the medicinal effects of the Green Spiritual Fruit had not been completely exhausted yet, and were still continuously improving his cultivation. They were finally exhausted once Ling Han made it to the middle period of the eighth layer of Body Refining Tier.

'Very good, it saved me about six days' worth of time.'

Watching all this, a strange thought rose up in Liu Yu Tong's heart--it was the first time that she had not been shocked by the quick ascent of Ling Han's cultivation level. After all, this time should be considered normal, as he had eaten a Green Spiritual Fruit.

The two of them continued journeying around the mountain. Ling Han continued to refine his sword skills, hoping to achieve three flashes of Sword Qi before he broke through to the Element Gathering Tier.

After another eight days, Ling Han had reached the peak of the eighth layer of Body Refining Tier. After storing up one night's worth of Origin Power, he began the process of breaking through to the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. By the time morning came and the sun had risen, he stood up, the corners of his lips lifting slightly upwards in a smile.

The ninth layer of Body Refining Tier.

'Very good, I need around another ten days' time and I will reach the peak of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. At that time, I will consume the second Green Spiritual Fruit, and in one breath break through to the Element Gathering Tier!'

Liu Yu Tong was naturally already numbed. Should Ling Han be able to break through to the Element Gathering Tier on the morrow, she might very well not feel surprised. Otherwise, if she still became shocked every time this guy did something surprising, she really might die an early death.

Ten days passed very quickly and Ling Han, as per his expectations, had already reached the peak of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier.

He took out the second Green Spiritual Fruit, and smiled, saying, "Today is my last day in Body Refining Tier... ai, it really has been a very long time!"

Liu Yu Tong could not help rolling her eyes in response. She had been by Ling Han's side since the time when he was only in the second layer of Body Refining Tier. How many days had it been? Just one month! This was "a very long time" he was talking of! But when she recalled how Ling Han had been stagnant for a number of years in the second layer of Body Refining Tier previously, his rueful feeling could be considered quite logical.

She started cultivation when she was thirteen, and achieved the Element Gathering Tier when she was fourteen. This point alone did make it seem that her cultivation progress had been much faster when compared with Ling Han's.

After Ling Han swallowed the Green Spiritual Fruit, he started to break through to the Element Gathering Tier.

He did not rush it. Instead, he only started to gather the medicinal effects within his body.

Usually, when a martial artist began the process of breaking through, even if they had the support of medicinal effects, they had to batter against the barrier repeatedly until it had somewhat loosened to be able to breach it. However, Ling Han had absolute confidence that as long as he had stored up enough energy, he'd be able to successfully break through this barrier on his first attempt.

Half an hour later, his body was brimming with Origin Power, and he felt as if his whole body was inflated.

This was of course but a misconception. It was just that he had stored too much energy within his body, causing him to have this kind of an "inflated" feeling. But should he still not break through or unleash this energy somehow, his body really might explode because of this accumulation of energy.

It was like a water pouch that had already been filled to the brim. If the pouch was not punctured to make a hole to release some water, or if the water wasn't transferred to a bigger pouch, then the only result would be that the pouch would explode.

'It's about enough,' Ling Han thought. 'Now all that's left is to guide this boundless energy towards the Dantian and batter against the barrier.'

Body Refining Tier meant to store Origin Power in every bit of blood and flesh, and so it was actually very limited in quantity. As for Element Gathering Tier, it meant to open up one's Dantian, and form a strange space within one's body.

Everyone possessed this kind of a small universe, or a small world, in their bodies. In terms of martial arts, this kind of small world was thought to exist within one's Dantian.

"Hong!"

Under the fierce barrage of energy, a slit-like hole appeared in his Dantian. For anyone else to break through, they would have to depend on a continuous, repeated barrage to endlessly widen and

enlarge this hole or slit. However, Ling Han was different. The energy he had accumulated was more than enough for him to immediately begin breaking through.

Opening up the Dantian was only the first step. The next step was the most important one.

That was, to solidify the Origin Power into a high-speed revolving nucleus.

This was something like installing a motor in one's Dantian. With a mental command, the origin nucleus revolving at high speeds would generate energy that would erupt with a horrifying attack.

How was it that the Element Gathering Tier could easily crush the Body Refining Tier? That was because once the origin nucleus was formed, energy would gush out like a flood from it. Even if two fighters had accumulated equal amounts of Origin Power, the one who had actually formed the origin nucleus would have faster, stronger attacks, possessing an overwhelming advantage over his opponent.

Chapter 33: Five Elements Origin Nucleus

Ling Han's opening up his Dantian could only be considered as being halfway to Element Gathering Tier. He had only raised the upper limit of his internal storage of Origin Power--the power upgrade depended on whether he could form the origin nucleus or not.

The number of those in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier who had been stuck on this step is unknown, but definitely very big.

Martial artists of the Element Gathering Tier could form a total of nine origin nuclei. Once they had succeeded in forming the ninth, they'd be able to start the process of breaking through to the Gushing Spring Tier.

However, for Ling Han, forming an origin nucleus was only a small issue. After all, he had already done it nine times in his last life.

He started to form the nucleus. The powerful Origin Power stirred, gathered, intertwined and melded together. He was very familiar with this process and, very quickly, the Origin Power within his body solidified into a nucleus form, as tiny as a hair's breadth.

But, he immediately experienced a great shock, for within his Dantian, there actually appeared five origin nuclei!

How was this possible!

He had only just broken through to Element Gathering Tier, and now he had already reached the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier?

No, no, no... this was an impossible thing, because these five origin nuclei were much too small, and were still very far from reaching their pinnacle--he had never heard that anyone had ever

managed to form five origin nuclei in one go and simultaneously expand them to their pinnacle form.

Additionally, the gaps between these five origin nuclei was much too small. They had a mutual attraction and repulsion relationship, forming a subtle balance. They were also differently colored--gold, green, white, red and black, respectively.

Ling Han's heart skipped a beat. These were the solid forms of the five different elemental alignments. These five nuclei represented Gold, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, respectively.

Could it be that a Spirit Base with multiple elemental alignments could form multiple origin nuclei?

But how was it possible that he had never heard of such a thing in his last life?

'That's not right!'

Ling Han carefully examined them and concluded that these five different origin nuclei had achieved a perfect balance. Should any of these five nuclei be even a little bit stronger, it would destroy that delicate balance. Thus, there would only be one origin nucleus, the strongest, that could "survive" in the end, while the other origin nuclei would be pushed aside and shatter.

Following this line of deduction, for someone to be able to form two, three, four, or the maximum of five origin nuclei, the elemental alignments of their Spirit Base had to achieve a perfect balance. This would allow the origin nuclei that had been formed to also be perfectly balanced with one another, none of which would be able to swallow the others and vice versa.

There were many in this world who possessed two elemental alignments, or even three or four. But those who had multiple elemental alignments and actually managed to achieve a perfectly balanced relationship between the multiple elemental alignments in his Spirit Base were few and far between. Thus, it was a pitiful

few that could actually possess two or three origin nuclei.

In his last life, besides burying himself in alchemy, Ling Han had also buried himself in cultivation. He took part in very few actual battles, and so not coming into contact with martial artists that had multiple origin nuclei was nothing strange. Moreover, multiple origin nuclei could become anyone's hidden trump card to turn over the tables and obtain victory, and who would reveal their trump card easily?

'The five origin nuclei would combine together to form a large origin nucleus, which means that I will have Origin Power five times stronger than anyone else!' Ling Han thought. This was something very terrifying.

For a martial artist to completely exhaust the Origin Power within his body, they'd need at least hundred plus moves, or even thousand plus moves. But should he be able to discharge this energy at five times the speed?

This would mean that the power of every attack would be increased by five times!

If the power of Element Gathering Tier was shown with numbers, the first layer would be 'one', then the second layer would be 'two' and the third layer would be 'three', but the fourth layer would be 'six'. There would be a leap after every three layers, separating the entire tier into the three major stages: early, middle and late, respectively.

With this kind of representation, the advantage of Five Elements origin nuclei was obviously without compare.

'No, no, no, the Five Element Origin Nuclei have also achieved a perfect balance as they are mutually interdependent, thus the power they can generate would definitely not be just five, but six times, or even ten times stronger! Should I reach the peak of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, I'd at least be able to fight on equal footing with someone in the fourth layer of Element

Gathering Tier!

How much power would I actually have... I'll have to reach the peak of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier to find out.'

So this was the true power of an Immortal Grade Spirit Base!

However, to simultaneously expand and strengthen five origin nuclei would definitely be much slower than expanding just one, so the advantage of cultivation speed of an Immortal Grade Spirit Base was thus evened out. Moreover, to be able to discharge Origin Power at five times the speed would require for the space within his Dantian to be simply colossal. Otherwise, he would only have the opportunity to make a few moves before exhausting all of the energy stored in his body, so how could he continue to play like this?

'Never mind if there's no advantage of fast cultivation speed. After all, I would obtain power that would make me practically invincible amongst all those within the same cultivation level in exchange for it. Moreover, I am the Alchemy Emperor, so I'll still be able to maintain a high speed of cultivation and progress through the tiers. Even if I can only reach Heaven Tier by two hundred years old again, that'd still be the fastest record in history!

No, no, no, I already have a complete understanding and comprehension of the different tiers, so I definitely would not need as long as two hundred years to break through to Heaven Tier.

The world is fair. To be able to obtain stronger power, one must make twice, or even ten times the sacrifice. Moreover, the space within my Dantian is still too small, so I still do not have the ability to battle for too long.

According to my understanding, only those Spirit Bases that have multiple elemental alignments that are also perfectly balanced can be labeled as an Immortal Grade Spirit Base. However, Immortal Grade Spirit Bases can also be separated into various categories, and my Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus is the strongest!

That's because there cannot be a Spirit Base with six elemental alignments in this world, as it would then be impossible to achieve a balance between the various elemental alignments.

No wonder I had a strange feeling when I previously read the second layer of this Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill. I had initially thought that the creator of this skill arts had made some kind of a mistake, but now it seems that this is because the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus is able to form Five Elements Origin Nuclei. If it's the simultaneous circulation of the five origin nuclei, there are no problems with this skill arts.

So, it seems that an Immortal Grade Spirit Base definitely needs a specific kind of skill arts to be able to release its full prowess. Otherwise, if I were to use an ordinary skill arts to stimulate the Five Elements Origin Nuclei... I really have no idea what would happen.

It seems that in this life, all my conditions are the best. If I still can't shatter the void and become a god with all those advantages, then I really should find a piece of tofu and knock myself to death with it.

Taking advantage of the fact that the medicinal effects have not been completely exhausted, I'll cultivate for a while longer.'

Ling Han guided the remnants of the medicinal effects from the Green Spiritual Fruit to expand his Dantian and strengthen his origin nuclei.

The cultivation process of Element Gathering Tier was to expand one's Dantian and strengthen the origin nucleus as much as possible.

The larger the Dantian, the more Origin Power it could store and accumulate. Meanwhile, the larger the origin nucleus and the faster its rotation, the stronger the power that could instantly erupt from it would be. Thus, even if two martial artists possessed the same cultivation levels, there would still appear a large gap

between their individual battle prowess.

Of course, the number of origin nuclei also had to be taken into consideration now.

Ling Han was like an excavator, enlarging his Dantian to enable it to store even more Origin Power and stimulating the rotation of his origin nuclei at the same time. With every rotation, the speed would increase by just a little bit more, and as strands of Origin Power twined around the origin nuclei, the origin nuclei would also become larger in size.

He had to be very cautious when strengthening the origin nuclei in his Dantian, because there needed to be an absolute balance amongst the five origin nuclei. Otherwise, if there was even the slightest bit of difference, this balance would collapse. The earlier the stage, the more there could not be any minuscule bit of difference, for the foundation was still much too weak.

Because of his thirst for power, Ling Han diligently continued to cultivate with utmost concentration.

'What?!"

While he had been energetically "excavating", he suddenly stopped, and an inconceivable expression appeared on his face.

A black tower was drifting within his Dantian, exuding a golden light that stirred slightly. It gave off a desolate, primitive air, ancient and dignified. There were nine levels in this tower, and from the angle of Ling Han's mind's sight, this black tower had a height of ten thousand metres, connecting the heavens and the earth.

Even though it had already been ten thousand years, Ling Han could still identify this black tower with one glance. In his words, even if this tower had been burnt to ashes, he'd still be able to identify it! Because, this black tower was the culprit that had "killed" him in his last life!

Curses, how could this tower be inside his Dantian? Could it be that killing him once in his last life was not enough so it had chased after him to this second life, planning to kill him a second time?

You can't play the game like that!

Chapter 34: Reappearance of the Black Tower

In his last life, after overcoming many dangerous obstacles, Ling Han finally entered the Black Light Ground Valley, whereupon he discovered a mysterious black tower. There was a golden script engraved on the walls of the tower, which was the Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

That had been Ling Han's biggest opportunity, yet it was also the largest crisis in his last life. With a shake of the black tower, his physical body was directly shattered into ashes--for some reason, his soul had survived and passed through ten thousand years into the current time period.

Now looking upon this black tower, even with his strong mentality of a warrior of Heaven Tier, he still could not help but feel scared for a moment.

In his last life, this black tower had only shook a little, and he was shattered into ashes. Now that it had reappeared within his body, how could this not be terrifying?

However, Ling Han very quickly regained his composure.

If the black tower intended to kill him a second time, then it could have done so long ago--although he had only just discovered the existence of the black tower within his Dantian, this thing should have actually been there for a very long time.

And now that he thought about it carefully, this might clear away some of the confusion that he had.

For example, why was it that his soul had existed for about ten thousand years?

It must have been because of the black tower!

The reason for his sudden rebirth must also be related to the

black tower using some kind of unknown method to allow him to be reborn. The black tower also conveniently followed him into this new life.

"Brother, should I thank you, or hate you? Huh?" Ling Han murmured.

Because of the black tower, his last life was ended prematurely, but to be honest, even if he had not been shattered to death by the black tower, with a short thousand years' time, how would he be able to learn the Indestructible Heaven Scroll?

It was completely impossible.

Because even when he had neither eaten nor slept, spending all his time on his studies of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, he still needed to spend ten thousand years' time. If it was under normal conditions, how would he be able to accomplish that?

Now, he even had a feeling that the black tower had actually shattered him into ashes to help him and allow him to comprehend the Indestructible Heaven Scroll in soul form, thus he was reborn the moment he had finally grasped the Heaven Scroll's first layer.

Otherwise, how could there be such a huge coincidence in this world?

The black tower, as it had been in the past, still possessed nine floors, and aside from the lowest floor having a tightly closed door, the other floors were all completely sealed, without a single window or any other entrance. Even with Ling Han's sight, he still could not identify the material used to construct this black tower. All he could sense from it was an icy, weathered, ancient air.

Additionally, Ling Han had never heard that the Dantian could accommodate anything else other than Origin Power!

This black tower was definitely not of this world!

There was a ninety-nine percent chance that the black tower originated from the divine plane, and so did the Indestructible

Heaven Scroll engraved on its walls--a cultivation technique that required ten thousand years to be comprehended naturally could not possibly belong to this mortal plane either.

Ling Han wanted to use his consciousness to enter the black tower, but discovered it was impossible. Even if consciousness was a power without form, and thus should be able to find its way anywhere, there was not even a small pinhole in this black tower through which his mental consciousness could enter.

He wanted to force his way through the door, but when he directed his mental consciousness to rush towards the door, it was immediately rebounded back.

Fine, this was a master.

In his last life, it erased his existence with a casual tremor, and now, its overbearing presence was occupying his Dantian while he not only couldn't do anything to it, but also had completely no idea what kind of existence this black tower actually was.

He was unwilling to give up, and once again commanded his consciousness to attack the black tower. No matter what, he had to find something out.

After a few times of barraging his mental powers over and over against the tower, it seemed like the black tower had somewhat lost patience with him. It actually gave a slight tremor. There was finally a reaction, and a flash of consciousness was transmitted out by the black tower.

This exceeded the level of simple language, and allowed Ling Han to directly understand its meaning. The general idea transmitted by the black tower was "the current you is still too weak, and cannot possibly enter the black tower. You'd have to at least break through to the Gushing Spring Tier. But as the new master of the black tower, every time you progress to the next tier, you'll be able to obtain a single blessing from the black tower to directly raise your power by one tier."

For example, as per Ling Han's current cultivation level of the early period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, with the blessing of the black tower, he'd be able to display the power of someone in the first layer of Gushing Spring Tier. However, it was only a one-time blessing. Even if he didn't use it, it'd be wasted, and couldn't be accumulated.

Master? He had actually become the master of the black tower?!

However, this black tower really was a [master](#). After all, if he was its master, why was it that he could not make use of it at all? Moreover, for every tier he ascended to, he could only get a one-time blessing from the black tower. Looks like he'd have to break through to the Gushing Spring Tier to be able to find out more.

Still, this could become his trump card--to instantly raise his power by one tier, this trump card was more than enough to let him turn the tables in a moment of danger!

But, he could only use this kind of trump card once every time he ascended to the next tier... the tower was really much too stingy!

Ling Han could not help exhaling a sigh before opening his eyes, looking very sullen.

Liu Yu Tong almost felt like crying at this. You managed to break through to the Element Gathering Tier in one day, and yet you still look so disappointed. How could this be endured by others?

"Come on, let's go home!" Ling Han gave a snap of his fingers.

This was the first time he had experienced the warmth of a father's love, and now that he has been away from home for close to a month, he felt a bit homesick.

The two of them then began their journey home. On the way, Ling Han went through the second layer of cultivation techniques of the Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill inside his head. With his high perception, naturally he experienced no trouble and fully grasped every little detail of the second layer.

There were nine layers in total in the Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill, corresponding with a martial artist's cultivation level from Body Refining Tier all the way to Heaven Tier. Every breakthrough would mean that there should be a change to the corresponding cultivation technique suited to that cultivation level. [ED/N: As in, he has to cultivate in the next layer whenever he reaches the next tier]

Element Gathering Tier was indeed something else.

Origin Power gushed out from his Dantian. The amount was at least ten times that of the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. Origin Power continuously flooded out from his Dantian as if there was no end to it.

When they had departed, they had spent about less than half a day's time to arrive at their destination, but their return journey only lasted about an hour.

Very soon, Gray Cloud Town appeared in front of their eyes.

"Greetings, Young Master Han!"

"Greetings, Young Master Han!"

From the moment they stepped into the Ling Clan Residence, all servants and guards greeted Ling Han respectfully. Everyone now knew that Ling Han had defeated the Cheng brothers, and thus naturally would not dare to be disrespectful to this Young Master previously well-known as Trash anymore.

After asking around, Ling Han found out that his father was currently inside his study, and quickly ran there.

Ling Dong Xing had said before that as long as he managed to break through to the Element Gathering Tier, he would tell him what had happened to his mother.

He entered the yard, and soon arrived at the door to the study. The door was ajar, and he gave a soft cough before entering, and said, "Father, I've returned."

"Haha, you returned just in time. Tonight, the Cheng Clan is hosting a banquet, and your name is also on the invitation," Ling Dong Xing gave a hearty laugh, raising his head to look at Ling Han while holding out an invitation.

Ling Han took the invitation, scanned through it, then said with a smile, "The Cheng Clan can't hold on any longer?"

Ling Dong Xing had long started his counterattack against the Cheng Clan.

When Ma Da Jun cut off the supply of alchemical medicine to the Cheng Clan, the Cheng Clan was like a normal human being who had lost a leg--their every step was a trial. Additionally, the Ling Clan was also attacking the other business ventures of the Cheng Clan--paying a high price to purchase the medicinal ingredients that were supposed to be sold to the Cheng Clan and selling them at low prices.

In this manner, the finances of the Cheng Clan were completely paralyzed, just as how the finances of the Ling Clan had been.

Twenty plus days of this, and the Cheng Clan was now trapped in a big dilemma.

At this time, the Cheng Clan actually sent them an invitation to a banquet they were hosting. This was most likely a plea for mercy.

"Later, the two of us will attend the banquet. But be careful, and don't run around at the banquet. I'm worried that the Cheng Clan may be desperate enough to set up a trap," Ling Dong Xing said. He would, of course, not brave the danger alone. The elite members of the clan would also be attending along him to act as a deterrence in case the Cheng Clan was thinking of committing violence.

Ling Dong Xing looked at Ling Han, slightly frowning. He felt as if something was not right, but exactly what that something was, he could not think of.

"Pa!"

After half a moment, he suddenly smacked the table, and jumped up from his seat, his whole face filled with excitement, and said, "Han'er, you... you've broken through to Element Gathering Tier!" He finally discovered what that weird feeling he had was.

Ling Han nodded, and said with a smile, "I have."

"Good! Good! Good!" Ling Dong Xing looked very excited, his hands clenched into fists. Because he had exerted too much strength into it, the bones in his fingers made a grinding sound, and the veins on his hands were protruding.

"Father, I want to know about Mother!" Ling Han said deeply.

Ling Dong Xing was hesitant for a while, before nodding his head and saying, "The current you does have the right to know. I had originally thought that the matter about your mother would be hidden in my heart for the rest of my life. I've hidden it for too long, so long that my heart is also very bitter!"

Ling Han nodded lightly. All these years, Ling Dong Xing had borne the pain of losing his beloved wife alone. There was no one to comfort him, nor was there anyone to shoulder this pain with him, so he naturally suffered a lot.

Ling Han swore in his heart that no matter who it was that had forced his parents to separate, he would ensure that this culprit would pay the price for this crime!

The two words "master" used here are different. When it refers to the tower, it means a badass super uber powerful dude (MC said brother earlier so I assume male gender here), and when it refers to MC, it means master as in owner, lord etc. Making it clear just in case.

Chapter 35: Ao Feng

"Years ago, I too was considered to be one of the geniuses of Rain Country. I was in the prime of my youth, filled with longing for the outside world. After I broke through to the Element Gathering Tier, I left my home to find my own way in the world. Eighteen years ago, I was searching for an antique relic in Dark Demon Forest, when I accidentally encountered your mother."

As Ling Dong Xing thought back to his past, his steadfast face could not help revealing a sliver of tenderness, especially when he started to speak of Ling Han's mother.

"Your mother's name is Yue Hong Chang. She was a very beautiful and very gentle woman."

Ling Dong Xing spoke in a murmur, and his gaze became extremely gentle.

"However, the first time we met, we had a slight misunderstanding, and ended up fighting with each other.

After that, we started journeying together, and built up a strong, deep affection for one another.

When your mother was pregnant with you, we decided to return to Gray Cloud Town, and at that moment, I found out that your mother came from a remarkable background. She was the great granddaughter of the Third Elder of Winter Moon Sect.

The Sect Master of Winter Moon Sect was a powerful warrior of the pinnacle of Spiritual Infant Tier, the elders were all in the Spiritual Infant Tier as well. Should any one of them appear, they would be able to easily obliterate our Rain Country!

Your mother's elders intended to marry her off to the descendant of another Elder of the Sect, a man named Ao Feng. He was extremely talented in martial arts--so talented that his talent could be claimed to be in defiance of the natural order. However, he was

a philandering character. There were hundreds of women around him, and he even had many sons and daughters born out of wedlock.

Your mother naturally did not wish to marry such a man, so she left home to get away from her worries, after which she met me, got to know me, and entered into a relationship with me.

But eventually, the Winter Moon Sect still discovered your mother's relationship with me, and dispatched elite warriors to capture us. We kept fleeing, and a short while after you were born, your mother's older brother, Yue Zhen Shan, and Ao Feng managed to catch up to us.

I will never forget what Ao Feng did to me at that time. He broke all my fingers one by one in order to force me to say traitorous words about your mother. However, he was disappointed. Even if I die, how could I ever do anything to hurt Hong Chang?

Your mother threatened them by saying that she would end her own life, and with that, managed to guarantee the safety of us father and son, but my Spirit Base was crippled by Ao Feng.

At first, I was of a mind to storm to the Winter Moon Sect and battle to the death, but for your sake, I decided to live out a contemptible life, and so returned to Gray Cloud Town."

Ling Han suddenly understood. No wonder Ling Dong Xing could easily enter and leave the Purple Light Ground Valley which even elite warriors from Hu Yang Academy did not manage to enter. His mother must have left some kind of secret treasure with his father that could ensure his survival years ago.

Spiritual Infant Tier!

Ling Han lightly frowned. It looks like he would not be able to retrieve his mother in the short term. There were ten tiers in martial arts, and the Spiritual Infant Tier was the seventh tier. Meanwhile, he had only just stepped onto the second tier, so no

matter how he looked at it, it'd take him about ten, twenty years or even more before he managed to achieve the seventh tier.

And this was still what he, with his comprehension of the tiers up to Heaven Tier, an Immortal Grade Spirit Base, a Heaven Grade cultivation technique and the support of his knowledge as the Alchemy Emperor, could achieve. If it was any other genius, even if they managed to enter the Spiritual Infant Tier within their lifetime, it would still be something that could only be possible after at least two or three hundred years' time.

He had to make full use of his time!

That's because, there was a limit to the lifespan of a martial artist. If a martial artist did not break through to the Flower Blossom Tier, they would enjoy a lifespan no longer than that of a mortal. At best, he would have no pains or illnesses and manage to survive to a hundred years old. But should he be able to break through to Flower Blossom Tier, then he'd be able to gain an extra two hundred years of lifespan, and breaking through to every subsequent tier would reward the martial with another additional two hundred years of lifespan.

Ao Feng!

Flames of rage burned strongly in Ling Han's eyes. Although Ling Dong Xing had played down what he experienced, Ling Han could imagine how much his father had suffered in the hands of Ao Feng on that day, and how much humiliation he had gone through for all his dignity to be lost.

If it was not for his sake, Ling Dong Xing would definitely have stormed the Winter Moon Sect. At worst, he would die.

An insult to the father was the same as insulting the son!

Ling Han had already sentenced Ao Feng to death penalty within his heart. However, as Ao Feng was a disciple of the Winter Moon Sect, and was even labeled a genius existence, what would his

current cultivation level be?

Spiritual Ocean? Spiritual Pedestal? Flower Blossom?

"Han'er, although you are very talented, the Winter Moon Sect is still a colossal existence to the two of us. You must not act impulsively. Otherwise, I really will not be able to face your mother anymore!" Ling Dong Xing said after regaining his composure.

Ling Han nodded, and said, "Please don't worry, Father. I will definitely not act impulsively."

"All my hopes are now on your shoulders. You are not only living for the sake of yourself, but also for the sake of your mother!" Ling Dong Xing said deeply.

"I understand!"

"Right, now that you have broken through to the Element Gathering Tier, you can participate in the Da Yuan Tournament!" Ling Dong Xing said, changing the subject.

"Da Yuan Tournament?" Ling Han searched through the memories in his head, and discovered that he did not have any relevant memories regarding this tournament.

Ling Dong Xing smiled, and said, "You had never shown such talent in the field of martial arts before, and so I never spoke of it to you. This Da Yuan Tournament is a martial arts tournament organized by the Da Yuan King's Mansion. It takes place once every three years. The requirements for the participants are: below thirty years old, cultivation level under Gushing Spring Tier, and being a martial artist that belongs within the sphere of control of Da Yuan City."

In Rain Country, cities were the largest administrative area, and there were thirty six great cities all over the country. Every city was responsible for an expansive area. Da Yuan City was one of these thirty six cities, and the one in charge of this city was called

the Da Yuan King--he was also a descendant of the founding emperor of Rain Country as the title of Da Yuan City's Lord and Da Yuan King was passed down through the generations.

Under the control of the Da Yuan King's Mansion were four great powers, which were in charge of their own respective barren areas aside from Da Yuan City itself. Stone Wolf Sect was one of them.

"What kind of reward will the champion get?" Ling Han asked.

Ling Dong Xing could not help feeling a little scorn. His son was really quite ambitious to immediately and directly aim for the position of champion. However, this was his excellent son. He thought for a while, and said, "It's apparently some kind of spiritual medicine called Dark Moon Grass. It's the chief ingredient for concocting Purple Origin Pill, which can help a martial artist in the Element Gathering Tier easily break through to the Gushing Spring Tier."

Ling Han was immediately flabbergasted.

The alchemists now.... were they all idiots?

Dark Moon Grass is of such high value, how could it be used to concoct a Yellow Grade High Level pill?! It was the chief ingredient for concocting the "Spatial Pill". The Spatial Pill could help expand the space within the Dantian of a martial artist, and this was something even elite warriors of Heaven Tier would be deeply jealous of!

Such a natural spiritual medicine naturally could let a martial artist in the Element Gathering Tier break through easily and successfully to the Gushing Spring Tier. Its grade was so high that it'd be strange if it did not have this kind of effect. But how wasteful was that?

The chief ingredient of Purple Origin Pill could be easily replaced with a lower grade medicinal ingredient!

Ten thousand years had passed... could it be that there was not

even the slightest bit of improvement to alchemy, and alchemy had degraded instead?

Ling Han broke out in a smile. He could not allow such a precious spiritual medicine to be wasted, so he could only take the Dark Moon Grass! Moreover, his Five Elements Origin Nuclei expended too much Origin Power at too fast a pace, and he was just worrying about the limited space within his Dantian! And here, the solution came knocking on his door!

Still, it was already the end of October now, and there were only about two months left before the end of the year, so it did seem to be a bit pressing.

Looks like he would have to make a trip to the Seven Wind Mountains, as the inner core of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake could be used to concoct the "Transcending Origin Pill".

A Transcending Origin Pill would allow the cultivation level of a martial artist in the Element Gathering Tier to forcibly increase by one layer, but it was only effective for martial artists in the early stage of Element Gathering Tier. For Ling Han, if he wanted to reach the middle stage of Element Gathering Tier before the year's end, then the Transcending Origin Pill was his only option.

However, the Red Scaled Dragon Snake was extraordinarily powerful and its whole body was strongly poisonous, thus Ling Han needed to make full preparations for this trip. Otherwise, it would be the same as throwing away his life.

Chapter 36: King of Eternal Night

"Father is not trying to attack your self-confidence here, but for every round of Da Yuan Tournament, within the ranks of the participants, there is no lack of powerful warriors in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and you've just entered the Element Gathering Tier. No matter how extraordinarily gifted you may be, you are still unable to compare with elite warriors in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier," Ling Dong Xing switched the topic of conversation to advise Ling Han.

It's good to have great ambition, but overconfidence was definitely nothing good.

Ling Han nodded. Every layer of martial arts was a stage, and every three layers was a large stage. There were very few geniuses that could manage to step over this stage, and defeat those with higher cultivation levels than their own.

He was now only in the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, how far was his power from that of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier? Moreover, there were some who had broken through to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier long ago, and although they had not yet broken through to the Gushing Spring Tier, they could still master their martial arts skills to a higher, stronger level. These warriors would naturally have battle strength that was on a completely different level.

If he had reached the peak of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, then with the power of the Five Elements Origin Nuclei, he'd have a high chance of winning even against someone in the middle stage of Element Gathering Tier. But if his opponent was in the late stage of Element Gathering Tier... the chance of Ling Han winning would only be fifty-fifty.

"After a while, I plan to head to the Seven Wind Mountains for training," Ling Han said. Although he had made this decision some

time ago, there was still a need to inform Ling Dong Xing of it.

Ling Dong Xing was instantly shocked. He naturally knew what kind of place the Seven Wind Mountains was--it was a world where demonic beasts rampaged, and there were extremely fearful creatures within the innermost parts of the forest. Thus, even martial artists in Spiritual Ocean Tier dared not venture too deeply! Ling Han was only in the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, it was too dangerous for him to enter the Seven Wind Mountains.

Besides, there were just two months left until the year's end, so even if he went there for a training trip, it wouldn't be possible for him to make much progress anyways.

"Please don't worry, Father. I will only travel around the outer zone, and won't venture too deeply in," Ling Han said, smiling. He truly had no such intention, for the martial artist who had discovered the Earth Dragon Grass was also only in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier--he too could not have ventured deeply into the Seven Wind Mountains.

Still, Ling Dong Xing could not help but worry. However, he also understood that his son was now a grown-up man, so it was impossible that he would listen to his father on every issue. Thus, he had only given him repeated instructions and advice. Fortunately, Ling Han was not planning to immediately set out for the Seven Wind Mountains.

Father and son conversed a moment longer about their daily lives before Ling Han returned to his room, where he took a bath to wash away the dust accumulated during his travel. He took out and changed into a new suit of clothes, though he felt it was a little tight.

He was still in the growing period, and within this month of travelling in the wilds, he not only grew taller, but his physique had also become much sturdier. Thus, when he wore the clothes he

had worn in the past, he suddenly felt as if the clothes had shrunk a size.

Thankfully, the Ling Clan had no lack of money, so Ling Han called for a servant to take his measurements and immediately head to the tailor's to collect some ready-made clothes for him to choose from. But when he spotted Liu Yu Tong, he could not help once again calling for a servant. Then, he had Liu Yu Tong announce her measurements as well, so that the servant could collect some clothes for her too.

This beautiful little attendant girl would naturally be attending tonight's banquet with him.

Very soon, the servant returned with a pile of clothing. There were more than ten sets of both male and female attire, and Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong slowly browsed through them. Ling Han very quickly made his choice, but Liu Yu Tong tried one suit after another. She appeared not to be too satisfied with the suits, yet also seemed to have much interest in every one of them.

Liu Yu Tong finally made her decision right about when the sun was about to set. After she had changed, Ling Han could not help giving a whistle.

Truly beautiful.

She was already an exquisitely beautiful girl. Now that she had changed into a long, lake water green dress, her delicate, well-shaped figure was on full display. Her round breasts, slender waist, slightly uplifted behind, together with a pair of shapely long legs, formed an image of complete femininity.

She had even deliberately put on some light make-up, allowing her facial features to be even more distinctly displayed. She really did make a tempting picture.

Seeing Ling Han's slightly shocked expression, Liu Yu Tong could not help feeling a little proud. All this while, she had experienced a

lot of shock because of Ling Han, and now that she had finally given him a little payback, she felt very pleased, so much that even the corners of her lips had lifted up in a smile.

She was originally an icy beauty. Now, with a smile on her face, it seemed as if the ice had melted and she looked truly lovely and alluring, elegant and graceful. Even Ling Han, with his firm composure, could not help staring.

"Let's go!" Liu Yu Tong slightly raised her jade-like chin, creating an attractive arch, making her look a little arrogant.

Beauties will be beauties, every move and action would make an observer carefree and pleased.

But when they exited the residence, Liu Yu Tong still had her beautiful face veiled, and carefully hid her alluring features behind the veil. Ling Han secretly felt this was a bit of a pity, yet at the same time, he felt a little pleased too, for the beautiful face of his little attendant girl could only be admired by him alone.

"Oh, right, do you know of any prominent geniuses in Da Yuan City?" Ling Han asked, while they were walking.

Liu Yu Tong's steps paused, and she said, "Are you intending to participate in the Da Yuan Tournament?"

"You're quite smart," Ling Han smiled.

"Rain Country has a nationwide great tournament that is held once every three years. If you manage to get into the top fifty in the Da Yuan Tournament, then you're guaranteed enrollment within Hu Yang Academy," Liu Yu Tong said. "This was originally meant to discover geniuses for Rain Country."

So that's how it is, Da Yuan City was not the only example.

"If you're talking about geniuses..." Liu Yu Tong pondered for a moment, lightly opened her mouth, and spoke, "The imperial city is too far away from here, so I'm not really sure. I only know of one person, because he is also a student of Hu Yang Academy."

"And who's that?" Ling Han asked casually.

"Qi Yong Ye, the fourth son of the current Da Yuan King. Others gave him the nickname: King of Eternal Night. He truly is extremely talented, with exceedingly high battle strength. When he was in the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, he had once killed a warrior in the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier," Liu Yu Tong did not hide her expression of admiration. Killing and defeating were two different matters after all.

"Three years ago, he was in the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and he had already gotten the second place in the Da Yuan Tournament. Now, he should already be in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier."

This truly was an extremely powerful opponent. Ling Han's battle spirit uplifted--it would be invigorating to trample such a strong opponent.

The two of them rendezvoused with Ling Dong Xing, and the company of three boarded a carriage that set out from the Ling Clan Residence. Meanwhile, closely following behind them were Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson, who had also boarded a carriage of their own.

"Father, you still haven't dealt with them?" Ling Han asked.

"When all is said and done, Ling Zhong Kuan is still the Chief Butler. Moreover, he has been running things for so many years that his power is deeply rooted. Although I've managed to remove some of his power, he's not someone I can deal with in a short period of time," Ling Dong Xing frowned, looking slightly displeased.

This pair of grandfather and grandson actually dared to try to steal the opportunity to enroll in Hu Yang Academy he had earned for his son, they were truly despicable!

Ling Han nodded. In the end, it was still the issue of actual

power. If Ling Dong Xing was in the Gushing Spring Tier, then no matter how bold Ling Zhong Kuan was, he would not dare have any wild thoughts.

The carriage swayed slightly on the way, and after about twenty minutes, they had arrived at the main door to the Cheng Clan Residence.

The Cheng Clan was the other Great Clan of Gray Cloud Town, so naturally their mansion was not something that common people's real estate could compare to. It occupied a space of a few tens of acres, the high walls of the mansion towering like a giant, creeping beast.

Not only the Ling Clan was invited to the banquet tonight, for all clans that were even slightly powerful within Gray Cloud Town had all received invitations. Thus, the Cheng Clan had already spread out a red carpet at their main entrance, with eight servants standing on either side. Every time a guest arrived, these servants would announce their arrival loudly and clearly, and naturally, there would be someone to come out from the residence to receive the guest.

When Ling Han and his companions stepped down from their carriage, immediately, a servant announced loudly, "Noble guest has arrived!"

"Haha, Brother Ling, I've waited a long time for you!" A middle-aged man stepped out to receive them, raising his clasped hands in the direction of Ling Dong Xing. His face was redder than dates, and his figure tall and sturdy. He was the Cheng Clan Clan Head, Cheng Wen Kun.

Chapter 37: The Plans of the Cheng Clan

"Brother Cheng!" Ling Dong Xing immediately plastered a smile on his face, raising his clasped hands towards Cheng Wen Kun in greeting.

"Come, come, come, you're the guest of honor today, I was worried you wouldn't be coming!" Cheng Wen Kun tugged on Ling Dong Xing's arm, presenting an image of cordiality and enthusiasm.

"This is Brother Cheng's banquet, how could I not give face to you?" Ling Dong Xing laughed loudly.

The two of them exchanged words, looking for all the world like a pair of old buddies. Those who didn't know the story would definitely not think that they were arch-enemies--either of them wanted nothing more than to see the other dead.

Ling Han gave a shrug. He had an utmost dislike for this kind of false politeness. Thankfully, in his last life, he was a genius of alchemy, thus there were only those who would flatter and curry favor with him and there was no need for him to do the same with anyone.

Cheng Wen Kun didn't even glance at Ling Han, as if he did not know that this was the person that had injured his two sons, and also the culprit behind the economic war between the two clans.

"Han'er, don't go too far," Ling Dong Xing instructed.

"Yes, Father!" Ling Han answered and followed him with Liu Yu Tong in tow.

Under the guidance of Cheng Wen Kun, they arrived very quickly at the Main Hall, where there were about a hundred banquet tables. At the moment, there were quite many who were already seated. As there was a name written on every banquet table, an incident of sitting at the wrong table would not happen easily.

The one who had made the arrangements for the Main Hall was a very attentive person, as he had considered the fact that some guests may arrive with female companions. As a result, although there was space for ten people at every banquet table, there would only be about five names written on each.

After Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong found their table, they took their seats.

"Young Master Han!"

There were already three others seated at this banquet table. They all greeted Ling Han, their faces filled with respect.

They were all young people, and also students of Gray Cloud Academy. Not too long ago, they had all witnessed Ling Han display his invincible might and defeat Cheng Xiang and his brother, plus they've also heard the fact that he was in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. Thus, they naturally dared not to display the slightest bit of contempt.

A sixteen-year-old in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier.... in Gray Cloud Town, this kind of individual would more than deserve the name of genius.

Ling Han smiled in response. After all, they were giving him face, so naturally, there was no reason for him to give them the cold shoulder.

After a short while, Ling Mu Yun too took his seat at this table, and while he looked as if he had not seen Ling Han at all, his whole face was stiff. After another short while, Cheng Xiang walked over and also took a seat at this particular table.

"Ling Han, you're not looking too bad!" Cheng Xiang smiled coldly at Ling Han.

Ling Han gave him a look over and said, "Hehe, the injuries on your face seem to have recovered quite quickly."

Cheng Xiang's face reddened instantly. He considered the fact

that he had been publicly defeated by Ling Han a great dishonor. Moreover, he was even forced to beg for mercy. Every time he recalled the incident, he wanted to commit suicide. However, after today, he would be able to completely erase this blemish on his honor and regain his pride.

"You can only have this short while to be pleased with yourself!" He said, coldly smiling, "Later, you will be kneeling in front of me to beg for my forgiveness!"

"Have you not taken your medicine? Or have you had an overdose?" Ling Han said, smiling.

Cheng Xiang did not say anything more, but the corners of his lips lifted up slightly, forming a mysterious smile.

The number of guests quickly increased. At first, most of the guests were still freely walking around. After all, this kind of banquet was also a good chance to endear yourself to your betters and to discuss business. But as more and more guests arrived, most sat down in their respective seats to wait for the banquet to begin.

The hostile relationship of the Ling Clan with the Cheng Clan was observed by all. They were the two greatest parties in Gray Cloud Town. If Cheng Clan decided to yield to Ling Han now, then after this, the Ling Clan would become the most dominant party in Gray Cloud Town.

As a result, there were many guests attending the banquet tonight; they were all here to witness a possibly historical moment.

Very soon, Cheng Wen Kun stood up and waved his hands in various directions, signifying that he had something to say. Most of the guests who had been whispering to each other also ceased their respective conversations, and the Main Hall became extremely quiet.

Was he going to admit defeat to the Ling Clan in public?

"The reason why I've invited all of you tonight here is to introduce someone to you," Cheng Wen Kun began.

As these words were heard, all those present put on blank expressions.

What was going on here? Wasn't the Cheng Clan supposed to be admitting defeat to the Ling Clan? How did this become someone's reception banquet? If they had known earlier, most of the guests would not have attended this banquet.

"Shua," the attention of the guests all switched focus to Ling Dong Xing. Now that the Cheng Clan has made such a move, then the one bearing the brunt of it would naturally be this Clan Head of the Ling Clan. They wanted to see how he would react.

But what invoked disappointment of most of the guests was the fact that Ling Dong Xing's face still maintained a serene smile, as if he couldn't care less.

Cheng Wen Kun continued to speak, "This person would be my nephew, Cheng Xiao Yuan, who left the clan at thirteen years old to become the disciple of one of the Elders of Stone Wolf Sect. Now that he has become slightly skilled, he has returned for a family visit."

Stone Wolf Sect!

All present experienced shock. The Stone Wolf Sect was the overlord within the surrounding thousand miles, and held ultimate power over tens of towns--including Gray Cloud Town. They could be considered the ultimate local tyrant. Cheng Wen Kun suddenly revealing this hidden card obviously meant that he had no plan to admit defeat to the Ling Clan. Instead, he was planning to use the Stone Wolf Sect to suppress the Ling Clan.

However, no matter how it was, Cheng Xiao Yuan was just a disciple of one of the Elders of Stone Wolf Sect, so his ability should be quite limited, right?

"Xiao Yuan has also very fortunately invited a very respected, noble guest!" Cheng Wen Kun was all smiles. This was his real trump card, "Let us welcome Chen Feng Lie, Elder Chen!"

Elder!

An Elder of Stone Wolf Sect? That was a powerful existence in Gushing Spring Tier!

Cheng Wen Kun took the lead in clapping his hands in welcome, and consecutively, the other guests all joined in the applause. At this moment, an old man walked out of the living room and appeared in their midst. He had a medium-sized figure and was clad completely in vermillion. He had a full head of black hair and a rosy complexion that shone with a strange glow.

Behind the old man closely followed a young man, who had his hands held at his sides and brow lowered, presenting an image of utmost respect.

Without doubt, this old man must be Chen Feng Lie, while the young man should be Cheng Xiao Yuan.

Chen Feng Lie strode towards the host's table and, as if there wasn't anyone else around him, took his seat, appearing extremely arrogant. But no one dared to express disapproval towards this kind of attitude from him, because he was a powerful warrior in Gushing Spring Tier. Even if the man was only in the first layer of Gushing Spring Tier, he'd be able to easily dominate a person in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. This was the ironclad rule of martial arts.

He did not speak a single word the whole while. In his eyes, this was the natural order of events. There was absolutely no one here that deserved to speak to him--had Cheng Xiao Yuan not begged and pleaded with him for many days, he would not even deign to show his face at such a setting.

Cheng Wen Kun directed a self-satisfied glance at Ling Dong

Xing. His meaning was more or less, 'I've even managed to invite an Elder from the Stone Wolf Sect here, and you still dare to oppose me?'

Cheng Xiao Yuan did not sit with Chen Feng Lie at the host's table. Instead, he made his way to sit next to Cheng Xiang grandly.

This guy was in the Element Gathering Tier. He should not have broken through too long ago, as he was still in the first layer of Element Gathering Tier.

"Young Brother Xiang, I heard you had a spar with someone some days ago and lost?" Cheng Xiao Yuan asked Cheng Xiang.

"I was less skilled than my opponent, ai!" Cheng Xiang gave a deliberate sigh.

"Oh?" Cheng Xiao Yuan rose a brow, and said, "Who did you lose to? I would like to take a look at this person!"

"Hehe, he's seemingly far away, but actually close at hand!" Cheng Xiang's gaze turned towards Ling Han.

"So you lost to this young genius?" Cheng Xiao Yuan smiled coldly, also looking at Ling Han, and said in challenge, "Do you dare to have a spar with me?"

Chapter 38: Battling Cheng Xiao Yuan

This pair of cousins continued their pleasant banter. How could the others not see that this was a deliberate challenge aimed at Ling Han?

The corners of Cheng Xiang's lips slightly lifted, and said loftily, "I forgot to mention, this cousin of mine just broke through to the Element Gathering Tier last year, and now he's about to achieve the peak of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier; it could even be said that he's an exceptional genius."

Meanwhile, Cheng Xiao Yuan smiled modestly, and said, "I only broke through to the Element Gathering Tier at twenty years old, so I can't really be considered any kind of exceptional genius. I am only one step ahead of most people."

When they heard him say this, the others seated at the banquet table all held shocked expressions.

Element Gathering Tier!

Although Cheng Xiang was in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier and was only nineteen years old, to advance such a big step forward would need at least three, five years--or it may not even be achieved in a lifetime. Thus, Cheng Xiao Yuan was being overly modest. Someone who broke through to the Element Gathering Tier at twenty years old definitely deserved the name of a genius.

Of course, the praise of "exceptional genius" was a bit of an exaggeration. After all, Gray Cloud Town was still too small a place, so any person who displayed a slight bit of outstanding talent would be named as "genius".

The common knowledge of martial arts was that difference of tiers was a gap that was near impossible to breach during fight.

Everyone looked at Ling Han, wondering how was this guy going to solve the predicament he was currently facing.

If he accepted the challenge, then he would definitely lose. Cheng Xiao Yuan may even kill him--with an Elder from Stone Wolf Sect present, what did he dare not do? But if he did not accept the challenge, then the reputation he had worked so hard to build up would collapse. He was trapped between a rock and a hard place.

But if you compare the possible consequences of each decision, then one should understand that refusing the challenge was the wisest move to make. After all, accepting the challenge could possibly result in death.

They wanted to shame him?

Ling Han's gaze focused on Cheng Xiang before switching to Cheng Xiao Yuan, and he couldn't help the corners of his lips lifting up in a smile. This scheme was quite well planned, but the Cheng Clan would never have imagined that he had already advanced into Element Gathering Tier, as well as the fact that his Five Element Origin Nuclei gifted him with incomparable power.

"All right, then let's spar for a bit," he said with a smile.

What, Ling Han actually agreed?

Not only did the others never think of such a thing happening, even Cheng Xiang and his cousin were shocked. But after a while, they both smiled coldly. Since this brat was looking for death, then let's give him a hand!

If Ling Dong Xing could not hold himself back from assisting his son, then Cheng Feng Lie too would take action to kill him too. This was what they hoped would happen. The script for tonight's show was to find an excuse to eliminate both Ling Dong Xing and Ling Han.

Even Ling Mu Yun could barely conceal the elation he felt. He too wanted nothing more than for Ling Han to die.

For clans of martial artists, spars during banquets were something quite common. They only needed to clear some space

outside the living room and there was a ready-made battleground.

With the deliberate publicizing from Cheng Xiang, the news that Ling Han would be having a spar with Cheng Xiao Yuan spread to every table. Additionally, the individual strength of the two fighters, or at least the battle prowess of Cheng Xiao Yuan, was made known to everyone.

This was a battle with a conclusion that held absolutely no suspense. Could it be that Ling Han was too proud and arrogant to refuse the challenge?

The two fighters stepped into the courtyard outside the Main Hall. There was an empty space of about ten metres cleared out here. Although it was not really very wide, it was more than enough for the upcoming battle.

"You really are an idiot!" Cheng Xiao Yuan smiled coldly, killing intent exuding from him. He purposely lowered his voice and said, "I will slaughter you!"

"Oh?" Ling Han gave a snort, "You are really daydreaming!"

"Then die!" Cheng Xiao Yuan gave a loud laugh, his fist flying towards Ling Han. He had no need to use any kind of martial arts skill--he fully believed that, with the strength of a warrior at the peak of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, he would be able to easily crush Ling Han.

There was a saying in martial arts which meant that enough strength would subdue ten rounds of battle. Under the pretext that there was too great a gulf between two fighters' respective strengths, there was absolute no need for any kind of martial arts techniques.

Ling Han held no fear as he too responded with a fist flying towards Cheng Xiao Yuan.

With everyone fixing their eyes on them, the two fists crashed into one another, and a powerful ripple suddenly erupted,

radiating out in all directions. "Peng peng peng peng", a few of those who stood the closest suddenly collapsed.

Meanwhile, Ling Han and Cheng Xiao Yuan were still maintaining their previous stances, their two fists pushing against each other.

'What!'

Seeing such a scene, everyone was greatly shocked, their faces filled with utter disbelief. Some who had been eating immediately spat out what they had been eating, accidentally covering the faces of those who had been so unfortunate as to sit opposite. For a short moment, the scene was one of complete chaos.

Ling Han actually countered Cheng Xiao Yuan with a fist, and it even seemed like their power was evenly matched?

How could this be possible!

Cheng Xiao Yuan's arrogant expression had completely disappeared as he said, deeply frowning, "Element Gathering Tier?"

Ling Han smiled faintly, and said, "You're not the only one who can break through."

In truth, almost everyone had already guessed it, but when they heard Ling Han's confirmation, a new wave of shocked exclamations still emerged.

Previously, when Cheng Xiao Yuan broke through to the Element Gathering Tier at twenty years old, he was already praised as an exceptional genius, yet now, Ling Han was only sixteen years old!

Sixteen years old and in the Element Gathering Tier? Gods, this was crazy!

Everyone turned gazes full of incomprehension towards Ling Han. This guy was a publicly acclaimed trash just more than a month ago--how did he, in such a short time, reverse his fortunes?

"Brother Ling, you truly have a wonderful son!" Cheng Wen Kun said in an awe-inspiring tone, his voice failing to conceal his killing intent.

A sixteen-year-old boy who had already achieved the Element Gathering Tier was much too terrifying. He was even more talented than Ling Dong Xing had been years ago--in the past, he had always compared himself with Ling Dong Xing, but now matter how much effort he expended, the gulf between himself and Ling Dong Xing only became wider and wider... until the moment when Ling Dong Xing returned to Gray Cloud Town, his strength stagnated in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. This was what finally gave him a chance to catch up to him.

But he had never imagined that Ling Han's talent was even more prominent!

He definitely could not allow this brat to live. Otherwise, perhaps in a few years' time, this brat could even possibly break through to Gushing Spring Tier, and at that moment, the Cheng Clan could only bow beneath the might of the Ling Clan.

Ling Dong Xing smiled faintly. In the past, his son had caused him much heartache, yet now, Ling Dong Xing only felt immeasurably proud of him. He said, "Just so-so, still can't compare to your Clan's Xiao Yuan, who had already broken through a year ago."

Damn it, how could a twenty-year-old who broke through compare with a sixteen-year-old who broke through?

Within the courtyard, Cheng Xiao Yuan took a deep breath, yet his heart was filled with overwhelming shock. He had heard Cheng Xiang mention before that Ling Han was only in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier just over a month ago, and yet he had astonishingly broken through to Element Gathering Tier now... this progression rate was really much too horrifying!

Could it be that this brat had some kind of treasure that allowed

him to speed up his cultivation rate?

When he thought about this, his eyes instantly lit up. It must be--this brat's reputation as a piece of trash was well-known all over town, but he had, all of a sudden, turned so powerful. It must have been that he had obtained some kind of colossal opportunity.

'Well, it belongs to me now.'

Thinking of this, Cheng Xiao Yuan opened up his fists, revealing his palms. He intended to use a martial arts technique.

Earth Shaking Palm, Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique.

This was a technique he had obtained when he had been on a training trip at a historical site. It not only allowed him to have an additional powerful secret art, but when he handed it over to the Stone Wolf Sect, he had also been rewarded with a "Origin Gathering Pill", which helped him to break through to Element Gathering Tier in one go!

Otherwise, there was no way he would have been able to break through to Element Gathering Tier when he was twenty years old.

He was filled with confidence. A Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique was considered top-rate even in Stone Wolf Sect. The martial arts techniques that had been passed down through the Ling and Cheng Clans were only Yellow Grade medium level martial arts techniques at best. He fully believed that once he used Earth Shaking Palm, he would still be able to easily control the situation.

Chapter 39: Killed

Ling Han raised his fists, a fearful aura erupting from him.

Dashing Panther Fist, Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique!

He had been practicing his sword skills these few days, so there was naturally not much progress in regards to his fist techniques. However, this fist technique was retained from his last life, so he would naturally not be unfamiliar with it. Even if it had not reached the point where he had mastered this fist technique, he had still reached the level that would take any other person tens of years of practice to reach.

After all, when it came down to it, the prowess he had once possessed as a martial artist in Heaven Tier didn't disappear without a trace.

When he used this fist technique, it was as if he transformed into a panther on the hunt--cruel, bloodthirsty and terrifying.

"Peng, peng, peng," Ling Han had already engaged Cheng Xiao Yuan in a fierce battle of strength.

"Eh, what kind of fist technique is this?"

"The Ling Clan has three ultimate martial arts techniques--one is a sword art, one is a staff technique, and the last one is a palm technique. They don't have any fist technique."

"Could it be that this is a Yellow Grade low level martial arts technique?"

"But would a Yellow Grade low level martial arts technique have such great power?"

Everyone was gasping in surprise, all astounded by the strength Ling Han had displayed.

Cheng Xiao Yuan's heart was filled with incomprehension. He

had already used a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique, but why was he still unable to overwhelm Ling Han? Could it be that a minor character from this insignificant Gray Cloud Town had also managed to obtain a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique?

Impossible! That's definitely impossible!

They had only exchanged a few blows, yet the pressure on Cheng Xiao Yuan grew larger and larger. Cold sweat dripped down his forehead.

The reason was, the power behind his opponent's every punch seemed to be continuously increasing, making it seem as if this guy had just learnt this fist technique, and as he continued to use it more and more, the power behind his attacks too increased further.

Actually, he wasn't mistaken--it was the truth.

Dashing Panther Fist was a martial arts technique Ling Han had used before reaching Gushing Spring Tier in his last life. He had not used it for a very long time, and now that he had picked it up again, he was naturally out of practice. However, a genius would always be a genius. They had only been battling for a while, and Ling Han had already come into his own, and was slowly displaying the power behind this fist technique.

A Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique theoretically would be able to increase the user's battle strength by seventy to a hundred percent. However, how much actual power would actually be released depended on the martial artist's grasp and comprehension of this martial arts technique.

Otherwise, a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique may not even be able to compare with a Yellow Grade low level martial arts technique.

Cheng Xiao Yuan could release about eighty percent of the power

behind Earth Shaking Palm, yet Ling Han could release ninety percent of the power of his own martial arts technique, and the amount of power he released was still increasing.

In this manner, Cheng Xiao Yuan was naturally at a disadvantage, and it was becoming more and more obvious.

This was Ling Han's ability--and he had only just stepped into Element Gathering Tier. Had he reached the peak of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, he'd be able to evenly match an opponent in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier!

"Genius!"

"Who would have thought that the trash from the Ling Clan was actually such a genius!"

"It's really inconceivable... since he's such a genius, why had he been so low-key in the past?"

"Let me tell you a secret. When Ling Dong Xing returned to the Ling Clan Residence years ago, he was completely covered in blood, holding an infant in his arms!"

"You mean, Ling Dong Xing had been hunted down by some powerful martial artist, and that's why he and his son had kept such a low profile? But then, why has Ling Han chosen to erupt now?"

"You ask me.... and whom should I ask?"

Previously, although Ling Han had defeated both Cheng Xiang and his brother within the grounds of Gray Cloud Academy, it made only a vague impression on the minds of most people. After all, there was only a limited number of students who had actually witnessed the scene.

But the situation was completely different now. Ling Han had not only broken through to Element Gathering Tier, but had also displayed a remarkably powerful battle prowess, pushing his image to new heights!

After all, in Gray Cloud Town, those who had actually broken through to the Element Gathering Tier would enter the ranks of the strongest warriors.

Ling Han continued to throw out his fists, and soon, what appeared to be an unknown fist technique became more and more practiced. His moves quickly became stronger and stronger, nearing a complete one hundred percent of power released.

Fist techniques were analogous to sword arts as they could form Fist Qi, which could consecutively solidify into Fist Ray. According to legends, in ancient times, when a star fell from the skies, a powerful warrior stepped forward bravely, and with one fist, shattered the star!

This powerful warrior was an elite martial artist that had mastered fist techniques. Moreover, he had not only managed to form Fist Ray, but had also grasped the highest mastery level of fist techniques—Fist Heart! Similarly, the highest mastery level of sword arts was Sword Heart, while for saber arts, it was Saber Heart.

Ling Han did not have such high talent in fist techniques. He had not even managed to form Fist Qi. After all, he was better at sword arts. However, even his current level of fist techniques was more than enough to deal with Cheng Xiao Yuan.

He used Exiting Cloud Step, making it seem as if his figure was floating. Those in Body Refining Tier could only feel the sight in front of their eyes blurring, as if they had seen several images of Ling Han and had completely no way to identify which one was the real one.

"Peng! Peng! Peng!"

He was completely at an advantage. Cheng Xiao Yuan only managed to block a part of his continuous barrage of fists, and some blows had already found their targets on his body. Although no vital parts of his body were hit, Cheng Xiao Yuan still felt pain

on a level that almost caused him to tear up.

Ling Han had completely no intention of holding back. This guy had obviously already planned to kill him and thus anger Ling Dong Xing, causing him to lose control in his rage, which in turn would enrage Chen Feng Lie. Thus, they would easily have a ready-made excuse to kill both him and his father.

Since Cheng Xiao Yuan was so malicious, why should he hold himself back?

One fist followed after another, and the speed of his attacks rapidly increased, slowly forming a flash of Fist Qi. With every sweep of a fist, there would definitely appear a splatter of blood on Cheng Xiao Yuan's body--Fist Qi, like Sword Qi, was incomparably powerful. At the highest mastery level, there was nothing in this world that cannot be shattered with one fist!

"What is that, such a terrifying attack power!"

"That's true, it's as if he had fixed an exceptionally amazing sword onto his fist."

"I know, that's Fist Qi!"

"What's Fist Qi?"

"Sword, Saber, Fist, Palm, and so on. One who puts their entire focus on one path would be able to form "Qi", which greatly increases the power of a martial artist."

"How is it I've never heard about this before?"

"That's because there are only a very rare few that can actually form 'Qi'! They have been acclaimed as... the rulers amongst martial artists!"

Everyone was shocked at the power Ling Han had displayed, and with the helpful explanation from a knowledgeable old man, they realized the terrifying strength of Fist Qi. Naturally, they were even more astonished. Could it be that an exceptional genius was

going to appear from within the ranks of Gray Cloud Town?

Meanwhile, there was no one more astonished than Liu Yu Tong, because she knew that Ling Han had not only managed to form Fist Qi, but had also formed Sword Qi before this, and actually possessed four flashes of Sword Qi!

What kind of monster was this guy!

Yet, Ling Han took no pride in his achievement. As one who had been a strong warrior of Heaven Tier, being able to form "Qi" was merely within his expectations. The slight difficulty would be when he tries to form "Qi" into "Ray", and "Heart" would be the actual real challenge.

Killing intent flashed within his eyes, and his fist flew out all of a sudden; the power behind it had instantly increased by several times!

With Chen Feng Lie overseeing things, in a normal situation, it would be very difficult for him to kill Cheng Xiao Yuan as Chen Feng Lie would definitely take action to stop him. Thus, he had to kill Cheng Xiao Yuan in one move.

After such a long battle, he could naturally identify his opponent's weak point. Additionally, he had not used his full power previously, conserving his strength for this last killing move.

"No!" Cheng Xiao Yuan's face was filled with terror. The power behind this fist was too much. He had no way of blocking it and coming out alive.

"Peng!"

A fist flashed out, and Cheng Xiao Yuan gazed at Ling Han blankly. "Pa," his legs grew soft and he knelt on the ground as his upper body swayed before he toppled loudly onto the ground.

His heart had exploded, and he was dead.

"How dare you, brat!" Chen Feng Lie suddenly stood, and flames of rage burned strongly within his eyes.

Cheng Xiao Yuan was his disciple only in name, but no matter how it was, he was still a proud member of Stone Wolf Sect. He was not someone the young master of a tiny little clan in Gray Cloud Town could kill.

His killing intent surged out completely. The pride of Stone Wolf Sect could not be tarnished. He wanted to kill Ling Han.

"Old man, if you don't want to die, then I advise you not to have any wild thoughts," Ling Han said deeply, as he turned to look at Chen Feng Lie.

Everyone on the scene bore the same thought: Ling Han had gone mad!

Chapter 40: Chen Feng Lie Bows His Head

He killed a disciple of Stone Wolf Sect first, and now he's threatening Chen Feng Lie... how bold was he?

Stone Wolf Sect was the overlord within the radius of one thousand miles. Compared with such a powerful entity, no matter if it was the Ling Clan or the Cheng Clan, neither clan had the qualifications to be compared with it on the same level.

Was Ling Han deliberately seeking his own demise?

Chen Feng Lie was startled for a moment, for he had been shocked by Ling Han's gaze--it was as deep and as vast as the ocean, filled with dignity, as if it belonged to a supreme warrior. However, he quickly realized that he had actually been threatened by a mere martial artist in Element Gathering Tier, and could not help laughing, and deeply said, "Oh, and how do you plan to kill me?"

"I don't need to do anything. Within five days, you'll die anyway," Ling Han said calmly, and pointed a finger at Chen Feng Lie, "About ten days ago, when you were cultivating, did you encounter some trouble?"

Chen Feng Lie's expression instantly changed. Just as Ling Han had said, while he had been cultivating ten days ago, he suddenly felt as if he had comprehended something, and decided to break through to the fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier yet did not succeed. On the contrary, he accidentally caused the Origin Power within his body to enter the wrong pathways, but thankfully, he managed to withdraw in time, and so there was not too much damage done.

How did this brat know that? Had he guessed?

Ling Han smiled, and said, "Try to press on the spot three inches below your left ribs."

Chen Feng Lie's first natural reaction was to say, 'How preposterous!', but his hand could not help moving and pressing down on the spot three inches below his left ribs. With a light touch, his entire expression changed once again.

Pain, excruciating pain!

"And the spot half an inch to the right of the seventh bone of your spinal column," Ling Han continued to say.

Chen Feng Lie once again touched that exact spot, and cold sweat appeared on his forehead. This was definitely not normal.

"You overdid it when you were cultivating. You don't sense anything wrong, because you are still in that state of madness," Ling Han said, before revealing a confident smile. "I can save you."

Chen Feng Lie clenched his teeth, and said, "Fine, you teach me how to cure myself, and I will forgive your sin this time!"

"Elder Chen!" Cheng Wen Kun was both shocked and enraged. Wouldn't that mean that Cheng Xiao Yuan had died for nothing then?

"En?" Chen Feng Lie turned his glare towards Cheng Wen Kun, his eyes filled with malevolence. How could a minor character like Cheng Xiao Yuan compare to the importance of his own life?

Cheng Wen Kun hurriedly shut up, cold sweat beading on his forehead. To actually dare to talk back to a strong warrior in Gushing Spring Tier... he would die a meaningless death.

Yet Ling Han only shook his head, and said, "In any case, you're in the Gushing Spring Tier, and yet your life is only worth so much?"

Chen Feng Lie's heart was filled with fury, but as his life was held in the hands of another, he could not allow himself to display any of his rage. He could only suppress the flames of anger and say, "Then what do you want?"

Ling Han smiled softly, and said, "That will depend on your performance."

Chen Feng Lie was extremely depressed. He was the Ninth Elder of Stone Wolf Sect and a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier. Under normal circumstances, he would be the one standing at the top, holding court over others. When did he become someone that could be easily manipulated by a puny, little martial artist in Element Gathering Tier?

But what else could he do? His life was held in Ling Han's grasp.

From the moment Ling Han had accurately pointed out the day he had experienced trouble in his cultivation, and through the agony he felt when he pressed down on the two acupuncture points, he no longer held any doubt and fully believed Ling Han's words.

"Do you have any commands then, Young Master Han?" He lowered his stance.

"Pu!"

Hearing the words "Young Master Han", all the observers immediately gasped in shock.

That was an actual Elder from Stone Wolf Sect, a real warrior in the Gushing Spring Tier, and he actually addressed Ling Han as Young Master Han. How could this not induce astonishment?

Ling Han revealed a soft smile, and said, "Are you planning to get the method of solution, and then kill me?"

"How could that be!" Chen Feng Lie hurriedly gave a dry laugh, yet he had already started sweating.

Ling Han's heart was clear, he naturally would not allow himself to be in danger--he would cure Chen Feng Lie, but would definitely not cure him entirely in one go. He pointed at Cheng Wen Kun, and said, "This man annoys me, thrash him for me!"

Cheng Wen Kun's face instantly turned green.

The reason why he had invited Chen Feng Lie was to gain a powerful support for himself so as to resolve the problem of Ling Dong Xing's closing in on them at every step, causing the stagnation of the finances of the Cheng Clan and leading to the entire clan being forced into a corner.

But he had never imagined, that this helper he had invited would actually turn around to help the Ling Clan. How could he not be sullen at this?

If anyone were to give him a piece of tofu now, he would definitely knock himself to death with it.

"Senior Chen!" He stuttered. In front of a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier, his cultivation level of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier was practically helpless.

"En? Are you planning to fight back against me?" Chen Feng Lie said coldly.

Cheng Wen Kun had no relationship with him anyways, so naturally, he had absolutely no conflicted feelings about giving the guy a good thrashing. He had already bowed his head to Ling Han just now, so he might as well just go ahead and throw caution to the wind.

Cheng Wen Kun's expression changed multiple times, before he finally just gritted his teeth, and said, "I dare not!"

If he dared resist, he would definitely die. Even a blind man could tell that Chen Feng Lie was extremely unhappy now.

"Pa! Pa!"

Chen Feng Lie raised his hand and lowered it, gifting Cheng Wen Kun with two slaps. The strength behind his blows caused blood to stain the corners of Cheng Wen Kun's lips.

There was complete silence in the Main Hall. The only thing

disturbing the silence was the harsh breathing of the audience.

Who would have thought that things would play out in this manner?

Even Ling Dong Xing had never imagined that his son was so capable as to be able to control a powerful warrior in Gushing Spring Tier, causing him to be both shocked and comforted. He truly had a good son!

The faces of Cheng Xiang and his brother kept twitching. If there was a hole in the ground now, they would really want to go and hide in it. They had been so confident and arrogant previously, thinking that they could now regain their lost pride. They had never expected that even their old man would be thrashed now.

The banquet tonight could practically be added to the Cheng Clan's history of dishonor.

Even when Cheng Wen Kun spat out a tooth and swallowed blood due to the thrashing, he still dared not display the slightest anger on his face. Still, no matter how shrewd he was, there was no way he could still put on a carefree expression. The veins on his forehead were protruding, showing that he was obviously at the deepest levels of his fury!

'Ling Clan! Ling Clan! I swear, I will definitely destroy you until nothing is left!' He roared angrily within his heart, 'As long as Third Uncle successfully breaks through to Gushing Spring Tier, we will definitely be able to avenge ourselves!'

Ling Han nodded, and said to Chen Feng Lie, "I will write a medicine formula for you, which will help you suppress your injuries temporarily. You will not have any trouble for half a year's time."

Though Chen Feng Lie did not want to accept this, he also knew that Ling Han would definitely not cure him completely in one go--if it were him, he too would have reservations. After all, Ling Han

was the weaker party here. He could thus only nod, and said, "Many thanks, Young Master Han!"

As things have already played out to this step, the banquet was obviously at an end. Staying any longer would only be awkward. The guests excused themselves one after another while Ling Han left the Cheng Clan Residence in the company of Ling Dong Xing and Liu Yu Tong after handing over the medicine formula to Chen Feng Lie.

"Hahahaha!" On the carriage, the hearty laughter that Ling Dong Xing had tried so hard to hold back was finally released. He waved a fist vigorously, and said, "I have competed with Cheng Wen Kun for over half of my life, but I have never released my pent-up anger like tonight! However, Han'er, tonight was still quite dangerous. Had Chen Feng Lie not experienced trouble in his cultivation some days ago, the matter tonight would not have been resolved so easily."

After all, a disciple of Stone Wolf Sect had died tonight.

Ling Han smiled--if he had not noticed that there was something wrong with Chen Feng Lie, he would still have two alternatives to choose from: the first alternative was naturally simple, to not kill Cheng Xiao Yuan, while the second alternative was to still kill Cheng Xiao Yuan, but reveal Liu Yu Tong's identity to take care of the issue.

But he no longer needed to consider this problem now.

"One more month, and the Cheng Clan would not even be able to pay the salaries of their own guards. At that time, it'll be our Ling Clan who will be the sole power in Gray Cloud Town!" Ling Dong Xing declared proudly and enthusiastically.

Chapter 41: Ma Lang

After the battle at the Cheng Clan Residence, the two clans who had been of equal status in Gray Cloud Town set off towards two different destinies.

The influence of the Ling Clan increased day by day, and they soon possessed enough power to be proclaimed the most dominant clan in Gray Cloud Town. On the other hand, the Cheng Clan was trapped in a huge dilemma, forced into a corner. One of the reasons behind it was the stagnation of their economy, but the other more important reason was the fact that their morale had received a heavy blow.

Ling Dong Xing really did have a good son!

This was currently the common understanding amongst the townspeople of Gray Cloud Town. None of them would recall the fact that just two months ago, this "good son" had still been a publicly acclaimed piece of trash and considered a complete joke.

The smaller clans in the town began to have frequent dealings with the Ling Clan, hoping to become in-laws with the Ling Clan. Their target naturally was the previously famous trash, and the currently well-known great genius, Ling Han. Of course, the Shen Clan thus became the butt of their jokes.

Initially, they had already claimed Ling Han, this excellent potential son-in-law, yet they themselves decided to go back on their own word and reject him.

Many wondered how Shen Zi Yan was feeling now.

Chen Feng Lie had just left, but another member of the Stone Wolf Sect arrived. His name was Ma Lang. He brought with him a law enforcement team, aggressively interrogating each and every clan, apparently looking for someone.

When Ling Han found out, his heart stirred. Could it be that

these people had come because of Hang Zhan?

Very soon, Ma Lang and his group had arrived at the Ling Clan Residence.

The Stone Wolf Sect was overlord within the nearest one thousand miles. Ma Lang was here on behalf of the Stone Wolf Sect, so no matter who it was, everyone had to give him enough face. As a result, the high-ranking members of the Ling Clan had all gathered at the Main Hall to receive this "Special Envoy".

Ling Han arrived a bit late, and when he entered the Main Hall with Liu Yu Tong in tow, it was already fully occupied. He gave a shake of his head to the servant who had been about to greet him before quietly walking over.

There was only one person amongst those present who was not a member of the Ling Clan, and that was a young man all dressed in white. He seemed to be about twenty three or twenty four years old and looked very average, yet there was a very powerful aura being exuded from him, full of an extreme self-confidence.

The only flaw was the fact that the smile on this guy's face was much too false, inducing disgust in those who saw it.

Aside from him, there also stood a line of people dressed entirely in black outside the Main Hall. All of them were in Element Gathering Tier, but their cultivation levels weren't very high. It appeared that the average cultivation level among them was either second or third layer. None of them seemed to have entered into the fourth layer.

...Fourth layer and seventh layer will forever be a difficult barrier to breach.

'This young man in white should be Ma Lang then,' Ling Han thought, once again turning his eyes towards the former. His cultivation level was much higher than his companions as he had already reached the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Within

this area, along with his apparently young age, he definitely would deserve the name of genius. The power of Shen Zi Yan, Cheng Xiang and such so-called "geniuses" was less than nothing when compared with this young man.

"Ling Clan Head, within the recent month, has any of your clansmen entered the vicinity of the Balance Mountain?" Ma Lang asked.

Ling Dong Xing's heart skipped a beat. He naturally knew very well that Ling Han had just returned from his trip to Balance Mountain, but now that Ma Lang had so coincidentally asked about it, how could he not be slightly alert? However, no matter how it was, he has had many years of experience in the position of Clan Head, and so was of course very shrewd. His expression did not change the slightest as he said, "As far as I know, none of my clansmen entered the vicinity of the Balance Mountain."

Thankfully, Ling Han had both left and returned very secretly. The other members of the clan only knew that Ling Han had disappeared for about a month, but none of them knew where exactly he had gone.

"Is that so!" Ma Lang gave a nod of his head and did not say anything else. He simply sat there with his eyes closed, seemingly deep in thought.

Ling Dong Xing was well aware of the situation, and hurriedly had someone present a wooden box, and said, "Young Master Ma must have had a difficult journey. Please accept this small token of sincerity from the Ling Clan, Young Master Ma!"

Ma Lang finally opened his eyes, and received the wooden box. He made no pretense of modesty and actually opened it on the spot. Inside only lay several thick pieces of paper, but when Ma Lang flipped through the contents, a smile appeared on his face.

These pieces of paper were monetary notes. Each piece had a denomination of five hundred coins, and there were in total four

pieces, which equated to two thousand coins. This was really quite a large sum of money.

He had come here on a mission, yet had already intended to seek monetary gifts. Who would not fear and respect him when he had brought with him a law reinforcement team from Stone Wolf Sect? After all, he was now considered a representative of Stone Wolf Sect. He had made his rounds around all the minor clans of Gray Cloud Town, leaving the Ling and Cheng Clans last.

As expected, Great Clans will be Great Clans. They were always very generous with their "gifts".

As he had already gotten his hands on "benefits", he naturally felt very pleased. He suddenly stood, and said, "I am under command of our Seventh Elder and am currently trying to apprehend a murderer. If you know of anyone who has entered into the vicinity of Balance Mountain within the last month, Ling Clan Head, please do inform me. I will be remaining in this town for a few more days."

"Of course!" Ling Dong Xing answered. He too stood up, and said, "Let me see you off, Young Master Ma!"

Ma Lang cheerfully nodded, putting himself in the role of "imperial envoy", both hands placed behind his back, taking big strides.

"Young Master Ma!" And right at this moment, someone suddenly spoke. It was Ling Zhong Kuan.

Ma Lang frowned, turning around and saying, "What is it?"

"I suddenly recalled, that there is one member of the clan that had disappeared for about a month. Perhaps.... he had gone to Balance Mountain!" Ling Zhong Kuan said, a cold smile playing about his lips.

"Oh, who is it?" Ma Lang asked.

"This person's name is Ling Han, he is the son of our Clan Head,"

Ling Zhong Kuan had been waiting for Ma Lang to ask him about it, and so his reply was quick.

Hearing such words, all the members of the Ling Clan started cursing Ling Zhong Kuan in their hearts.

Putting aside the fact that Ling Han was now a ray of hope to the Ling Clan and a strong pillar of support for the clan in the future, even if he was the trash he had once been, as long as his surname was Ling, you still can't help an outsider hurt your own clansman! And he wanted to become Clan Head with this kind of temperament? The future of the Ling Clan would really become bleak if he succeeded.

Ling Dong Xing was naturally raging in his heart, and regretted that he had not tidied up the clan. Based on the fact that they all shared the same surname of Ling, he had not been ruthless, but he had never thought that Ling Zhong Kuan would actually be so heartless himself.

Ma Lang turned to look at Ling Dong Xing, and asked, "Ling Clan Head, was there such a matter?"

Ling Dong Xing's expression remained unchanged, as he said, "My son did leave on a training trip slightly over a month ago, but he had not gone to Balance Mountain."

"Oh, then where had he gone?" Ma Lang narrowed his eyes.

"Seven Wind Mountains," Ling Han stepped out.

"So you're Ling Han?" Ma Lang turned his gaze to Ling Han.

"I am Ling Han," Ling Han nodded

Ma Lang stared at Ling Han, a grim expression on his face, causing all those present to feel a chill that foretold of an upcoming storm.

"Hahahaha!" He suddenly laughed, walked over and patted Ling Han's shoulder, saying, "Don't be so nervous, we are just here to

ask around a bit. I still have to go to the Cheng Clan Residence, but I'll return for a visit. I think we will have many common topics to chat about."

This young man really was very temperamental.

Ling Han smiled faintly, and said, "Hope to see you again."

"Ling Clan Head, you don't have to see me off!" Ma Lang gave a wave of his hands, and left together with his group of black-clad people.

When his figure disappeared from sight, all those in the hall finally released the breath they had been holding. Somehow, without themselves realizing it, their bodies had been covered in a layer of cold sweat. This was a sign of how much pressure the presence of this young man had exerted on them.

Poisonous snake!

That's right, a poisonous snake! This young man was exactly like a poisonous snake! Anyone who shared the same space with him would be anxious to the point of perspiring.

Chapter 42: Schemes

After stepping out of the Ling Clan Residence, Ma Lang said to himself in a voice only he himself could hear, "That brat is in Element Gathering Tier, and moreover, he's only sixteen years old!"

A tiny little Gray Cloud Town, and there is actually a martial artist that entered into Element Gathering Tier below twenty years old! He either ate some kind of Divine Fruit, or obtained some kind of secret treasure. I'll have to go and ask around."

To know about a person, it would actually be the fastest to find out from his enemy, because it was possible that your enemy may know more about you than you know about yourself.

Ma Lang brought his people to the Cheng Clan Residence, and half an hour later, his face was all smiles, excitement filling his eyes.

"Two months ago, that brat had still been a publicly acclaimed trash, yet all of a sudden, he erupted. According to news from the Ling Clan, that brat had only been maintaining a low profile in the past, but however low-key he had been, how could it have been to the point that his betrothed would break the betrothal contract with him?

Heng, the people of Gray Cloud Town cannot see clearly because they are closely involved! This brat had obviously gotten his hands on some kind of ultimate treasure, and that's why his cultivation has advanced so much in such a short period of time!

How else would it have been possible for a trash with a Five Elements Disarray Spirit Base to suddenly experience such an eruption in his cultivation that he has reached Element Gathering Tier?

And, it was even to the point that even Ninth Elder has been bluffed by this brat!

Even such a trash could get from the second layer of Body Refining Tier and into Element Gathering Tier within a short two months' time, then if I managed to make use of it...."

Ma Lang's heartbeat uncontrollably and rapidly increased. He was considered a genius existence within this generation of Stone Wolf Sect. At the same time, he was also a disciple of Seventh Elder, and based on power, was ranked within the top three disciples of Stone Wolf Sect. The Elders within the Sect had all placed heavy hopes on his shoulders because he had a hope of breaking through to Gushing Spring Tier.

But if he progressed at a normal rate, that would only be possible at least twenty years later.

"Once I get my hands on that treasure, within three years, no, maybe even one year, I'd be able to break through to Gushing Spring Tier. After all, I possess an Earth Grade medium level Spirit Base. My natural talent overwhelms that trash by who knows how many times!"

However, the Ling Clan's power is not weak either. I cannot act impulsively. Otherwise, if the Ling Clan is driven to desperate action, they may even choose to destroy the treasure rather than hand it over to me. In that case, I will not be able to obtain that treasure then.

Plus, if I create too much noise here, it might attract the attention of the stronger members of the Sect. Then there would be no chance for me to get that treasure.

Additionally, that brat seems to have some kind of relationship with Ninth Elder. Although there is a big gap between the status of Ninth Elder and Master, if he steps out, I still can't openly disobey him.

So, this matter must be done subtly...

...That's right, I have quite a good relationship with Little Poison

Lord, Yu Zheng. This person is skilled in the use of poisons, and has the nickname of "Shadowless Poisonous Hands". If I make him give me a hand, I'd definitely be able to easily take Ling Han down. After I force him to hand over the secret treasure he has, I'll have Yu Zheng executed and announce to the public that he is the murderer of Hang Zhan.

As for the other members of the Ling Clan... I'll have them all killed just in case, to avoid any possible information leaks.

I'll immediately have someone send a letter to Little Poison Lord. I will remain here and pretend to befriend that brat while simultaneously inquiring about the origins of that secret treasure.

Less than a month, and this secret treasure will belong to me!"

After Ma Lang arrived in Gray Cloud Town, he continued to hang around, and every few days, he would go to the Ling Clan Residence to have a drink and chat with Ling Han, as if he had hit it off with Ling Han at first sight. But on the other hand, the guy was extremely greedy, and kept finding excuses to get offerings from all the other minor clans.

Intimidated by the might of Stone Wolf Sect, as well as scared off by the law reinforcement team he had brought with him, he managed to succeed every time.

It was almost a month since he first came, and there were angry complaints from all the clans of Gray Cloud Town. They wanted nothing more than to chase away this bloodsucker from their town.

Yet Ling Han acted as if nothing was happening. He persisted in working hard at cultivating every day as he wanted to reach the peak period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier as soon as possible, so that he'd have enough assurance to enter into Seven Wind Mountains to search for the Earth Dragon Grass and return

safely.

During this month of hard work, he had almost reached the peak period of this layer. His Five Elements Origin Nuclei were also nearing their ultimate form. The speed of rotation could no longer be increased, not even by a little bit. Otherwise, he would immediately throw up blood.

However, this rotation speed was still much faster than it had been in his last life as the five nuclei had reached a perfect balance, and thus increased his capacity by quite a large amount.

He had also concocted many different alchemical pills within this time period, including some medium-level Return Origin Pills, as well as some antidote pills. This was the preparation work for dealing with the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. He obtained the ingredients for these pills from Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. In exchange, he handed over some completed pills as payment, causing Zhu He Xin to be incomparably excited as these pills were concocted by a Grandmaster, and thus had much research value.

'My current power level is equivalent to a normal martial artist in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier,' Ling Han thought, an expression of admiration appearing on his face. Immortal Grade Spirit Base is Immortal Grade Spirit Base alright. The owner had already obtained an absolutely advantageous position when fighting with an opponent of the same cultivation level. There was practically no chance of defeat.

'To take one month to fully cultivate a layer... this is much slower than what I had expected. However, it's still much faster than Yu Tong. Still, when compared with Body Refining Tier, the natural advantage of Immortal Grade Spirit Base has decreased by a lot.'

'If I take alchemical pills as well, then the rate can still be increased slightly,' Ling Han thought.

However, Gray Cloud Town was too small, so pills that could

help a martial artist in Element Gathering Tier speed up his cultivation rate were very rarely sold there. Even the ingredients for such pills were rare.

"Kou, kou, kou," a knock sounded on the door. Liu Yu Tong entered and said, "Ma Lang is here again."

Ling Han revealed a disdainful smile, and said, "He must be thinking that I've obtained some kind of secret treasure, and that's why my cultivation progress is so rapid. He has tried to sniff out information from me quite a few times."

"Do you need me to send him away?" Liu Yu Tong asked.

She was in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier and, furthermore, was close to reaching the peak period of the ninth layer. It would be as easy as turning over her hand to deal with a martial artist in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

"No need, it seems like his patience is close to being completely exhausted. It's about time for him to lay his cards on the table," Ling Han shook his head. His eyes were bright. Ma Lang was in the peak period of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and this would be a good opportunity for him to test out his own battle prowess.

He walked towards the Main Hall with Liu Yu Tong in tow. Ling Dong Xing was already seated within the Main Hall. Both Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson were present too, though they were standing at one side, big smiles on their faces. Who knows what kind of poisonous thoughts they were entertaining.

'It is about time to completely dispose of Ling Zhong Kuan and his group,' Ling Han thought.

However, aside from Ma Lang, there was another young man dressed all in black. He looked like a living dead, for there was absolutely no expression on his face.

"Brother Ling, we haven't met for a few days, how have you

been?" Ma Lang stood, his eyes circling around Liu Yu Tong's beautiful, shapely figure, revealing some heat.

Such an exceptional beauty caused even his heart to skip a beat. He swore that after he had killed Ling Han and obtained the secret treasure the latter had, he would definitely get his hands on this rare woman.

Ling Han smiled faintly, and said, "I am very well."

While Ling Dong Xing commanded someone to serve tea, Ma Lang enthusiastically offered Ling Han an invitation to visit Stone Wolf Sect for fun.

As Ling Han raised the tea cup, and lifted the cover of the cup, his expression instantly changed slightly.

There was poison in the cup!

He was an alchemist, and alchemists always have a very deep understanding of poisons and venoms as some alchemical pills required certain poisonous ingredients in their concoction, fighting fire with fire.

"Pa!"

He waved out a palm, and his Origin Power created a tremor that instantly shattered the teacup Ling Dong Xing had raised to his lips, the tea within it splattering in all directions.

"Han'er!" Ling Dong Xing was shocked. He had no idea what his son was doing.

"There's poison in the tea!" Ling Han said.

"What?" A severe expression flashed in Ling Dong Xing's eyes. His first reaction was not to doubt his son's judgement, but to turn his glare towards Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson. The only one present who had the motive as well as the ability to poison their tea would definitely be Ling Zhong Kuan.

Chapter 43: Poisoned

Instantly, Ling Zhong Kuan jumped up all of a sudden like a cat that had its tail stepped on and, while pointing at Ling Dong Xing, he said, "Ling Dong Xing, what do you mean, are you accusing me of trying to poison you?"

He could not control his anxiety as there were noble guests from the Stone Wolf Sect present--what great, unforgivable crime was it to attempt to poison disciples of Stone Wolf Sect? This kind of crime would definitely cause him to die a hundred times!

More importantly, he really didn't do such a thing!

The old man had plotted many schemes throughout his life and had done quite a number of bad things, but it was still the first time that he had experienced being wrongly accused by someone else! In his fury, even his face had turned green.

Ling Dong Xing naturally knew that he himself did not place the poison, and Ma Lang had no reason to, so then the largest suspect could only be Ling Zhong Kuan. He humped and said, "Ling Zhong Kuan, because we both are members of the Ling Clan, I have always tolerated you, but this time, you've gone too far!"

If Ma Lang died here, he, as the Clan Head of the Ling Clan, would not be able to escape responsibility.

"It's not him!" Ling Han shook his head.

"Not him?" Ling Dong Xing's face was filled with surprise, while Ling Zhong Kuan had an expression of disbelief. He had never imagined that Ling Han would actually speak up on his behalf.

Ling Han gave a smile, and said, "This pair of trashes wouldn't be able to concoct such a poison."

This...!

Ling Zhong Kuan and Ling Mu Yun were furious. The reason why

they were not suspected was because they were trash and did not have the ability to concoct such a poison? But when compared to being found guilty of the crime of attempting to poison a disciple of Stone Wolf Sect, they still chose to remain silent.

"So, then who's the culprit?" Ling Dong Xing wore a puzzled expression.

Ling Han glanced at Ma Lang, a smile unfolding on his face, and said, "Brother Ma, do you not intend to explain yourself?"

"Explain what?" Ma Lang's face was filled with absolute confusion.

Killing intent slowly revealed itself on Ling Dong Xing's face. From Ling Han's words, this poison had actually been placed in their tea by Ma Lang? But the problem was, when had Ma Lang gotten the opportunity to poison their tea? The water in their tea came from their own well, the tea leaves also belonged to their own Ling Clan, and the one who prepared the tea was also one of their own people!

If this was known to others outside the clan, they would definitely die of laughter. You couldn't wrong a man like that.

But as this was coming from his son's mouth, Ling Dong Xing chose to believe it absolutely.

This was the trust that a father had in his son.

"Was is not you, Brother Ma, who had placed the poison?" Ling Han asked.

"Peng!"

Ma Lang suddenly slammed his hand on the table and stood up from his seat, furiously saying, "Ling Han, I take you as a friend, yet you wrong me in this way. What is your intention? You say I poisoned your tea? How did I do such a thing? This water, these tea leaves, the servant who prepared the tea all belong to your Ling Clan, so when would I have the chance to do such a thing?"

"Ling Han, you actually dared to slander a disciple of Stone Wolf Sect, this is definitely unforgivable!" Ling Zhong Kuan took the opportunity to immediately jump out and shout.

Ma Lang's gaze turned to Ling Zhong Kuan, and he said, "Chief Butler Ling, I suspect this pair of father and son has murdered a fellow disciple of our sect, Hang Zhan. Are you willing to assist me in their arrest?"

Ling Zhong Kuan was immediately very pleased, and said, "I am willing to listen to Young Master Ma's commands, and be of service to the Stone Wolf Sect!"

"Very good, you will be responsible for subduing Ling Dong Xing while I shall deal with this brat!" Ma Lang said while directing a meaningful look at the young man in black.

The young man in black nodded slightly, extended a hand into his sleeve and withdrew a jade bottle. He suddenly threw this bottle at the floor, and with a "pu" sound, black fumes immediately dissipated everywhere, very rapidly spreading to all the corners of the Main Hall.

Poisonous gas?

Without waiting for anyone to remind them, everyone held their breaths to avoid breathing the gas in. It was definitely nothing good.

"Hahahaha, I never thought you could actually be so quick-witted," Ma Lang revealed a malevolent expression, "It's true, it was I who had poisoned the water in your well. I never thought you would be so alert. Fortunately, I had already prepared Plan B. Let me introduce someone to you. This is my good friend, Yu Zheng, who holds the nickname of 'Little Poison Lord'.

This is Origin Shattering Powder; once you breathe it in, it'll cause the Origin Power within your bodies to stagnate, and you'll become powerless. You won't even have the strength to remain

standing."

Ling Dong Xing naturally felt great fury within his heart, but he could not even expel this anger in a loud rage, for the moment he opened his mouth, he would definitely inhale this Origin Shattering Powder, and that'd be the end.

The worst thing was Ling Zhong Kuan was actually still continuing in his attacks on his person, obviously intending to obstruct him here.

This old guy's desire to take the position of the Clan Head had already overwhelmed all his logical processes, and was already mad with it. Did he think that once he got rid of Ling Dong Xing, he'd be able to finally take the seat of Clan Head? However, with the way that Ma Lang had shown how ruthless he could be, how was it possible that he would leave any member of the Ling Clan alive?

Old fool!

Ling Han withdrew a pill bottle from his sleeve. He took out a medicinal pill from it, which he swallowed, then took out another, throwing it to Liu Yu Tong. He took out another, and said to Ling Dong Xing, "Father, this pill has the effect of curing poison; it can easily deal with the poisonous effects of the Origin Shattering Powder."

Liu Yu Tong naturally swallowed the pill she had received quickly. Ling Dong Xing slammed a palm attack on Ling Zhong Kuan, and disengaged from the battle, rushing over.

Ma Lang made no move to stop them. In his opinion, Ling Han's medicinal pill would be of absolutely no effect.

The reason was, every lock had its own key, and every antidote naturally could only cure a specific poison. It was illogical to say that Ling Han had so coincidentally possessed an antidote on hand that could deal with the poison of Origin Shattering Powder. How

could he believe such a thing?

Haha, then let them believe that this pill would be able to cure their poison. At that moment, they would definitely open their mouths and breathe, thus inhaling the poisonous Origin Shattering Powder. Then, it would be too late for regrets.

Ling Dong Xing received the pill and swallowed it in one mouthful. He trusted his son without a doubt. After he had swallowed the pill, he immediately started breathing. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to continue the battle for too long if he kept holding his breath.

The young man in black revealed a mocking smile. He was actually considered half an alchemist, though he had not used his mental capacities on the concoction of alchemical pills. Instead, he mixed various kinds of poisons, researching various methods to use poison to kill.

This Origin Shattering Powder was different from those low-grade products on the market. He had added a lot of other poisons to it. It not only had the effects of slowing down the circulation of Origin Power and disintegrating physical strength, it even had the effect of corroding one's internal organs, possessing a terrifying poison.

...If it was not poisonous, how could he be qualified for the name of 'Little Poison Lord'?

Unless it was the antidote that he himself had concocted, there really was no cure for it.

Ma Lang too did not rush. After all, Ling Dong Xing was still in the peak period of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier and possessed tremendous battle strength. It was too foolish to fight with him head on. As long as he waited for a while longer, Ling Dong Xing would be defeated even without a battle.

As the saying goes, a cornered dog will jump over the wall. He

had absolutely no intention of entering a life-and-death struggle with the man.

Meanwhile, Ling Dong Xing was deeply frowning. Now what?

Ma Lang could behave in this deranged manner, but could the Ling Clan bear the risk? Killing a disciple of Stone Wolf Sect, who moreover was in the role of "imperial envoy"... this was a huge crime that could lead to the Ling Clan's utter destruction!

"There is nothing to ponder too much about. We are not fish on the chopping board, lying there waiting for others to chop us up!" Ling Han was much more decisive, as he did not have as much apprehension as Ling Dong Xing. Additionally, he also knew how many trump cards he could make use of.

...Chen Feng Lie, Zhu He Xin, as well as the Liu Clan of the Imperial City that was behind Liu Yu Tong.

Ling Dong Xing too quickly made his decision. He did not possess an indecisive character, and his killing intent immediately surfaced.

"En?"

Meanwhile, Ma Lang and Yu Zheng both assumed a very strange expression, wondering why was it that Ling Dong Xing and the rest had not yet revealed the symptoms of succumbing to the poison? After all, they should already manifest by now.

Could it be... that the pill that they had taken earlier had really cured their poison?

"Ah!" At this moment, Ling Zhong Kuan screamed in agony, suddenly falling to the ground. His four limbs were twitching and his face was twisting. He was obviously in unbearable agony. Ling Mu Yun was in the same condition. He too had collapsed on the ground in uncontrollable spasms.

Chapter 44: Battling Ma Lang

"An... antidote!" Ling Zhong Kuan moaned. This Origin Shattering Powder not only disintegrated his Origin Power, it also weakened him. It also had extremely powerful poisonous effects, corroding his internal organs and causing him to moan in excruciating agony.

Who knew if he was saying these words to Ling Han or Ma Lang, or perhaps he could be saying it to both of them.

But Ling Mu Yun could no longer say a word, and could only create a "ke ke ke" sound with his throat. His whole body was covered in cold sweat, the agony he was feeling had to be beyond description.

Ma Lang and Yu Zheng did not spare these two men any attention. They only kept staring at Ling Han in shock. Obviously, this brat's pill really had the ability to cure their poison. But the question was, how could there be such a coincidence in this world--that his pill would so coincidentally be an antidote to the Origin Shattering Powder?

Or did that mean the pill this brat had contained the ability to cure multiple types of poisons?

"You reap what you sow!" Ling Han humped coldly, without any slightest bit of mercy. He turned towards Ma Lang and said, "Father, how about you deal with that whatever 'Little Poison Lord', while I handle this guy?"

"Are you sure?" Ling Dong Xing was slightly worried. After all, Ma Lang was in the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and thus much stronger than his son, who had just entered the Element Gathering Tier.

"Don't worry, Father," Ling Han put on a confident smile.

"Heng, where is the law enforcement team?" Ma Lang gave a loud

shout. As things had already proceeded to this step, he could only use force.

"Shua shua shua," more than ten people dressed in black flew in from outside the Main Hall, each and every one of them exuding a powerful killing intent.

"Aside from this brat and that woman, execute all the others!" Ma Lang said loudly. He knew that Ling Dong Xing was in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and possessed tremendous battle strength. However, he possessed the advantage in numbers, so there was still a chance of emerging victorious.

"Understood!" All the black-clad people answered coldly. They drew their respective weapons and aimed them at Ling Dong Xing.

Ling Dong Xing did not feel any fear. He was in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so how could he be overwhelmed by a few low-layer Element Gathering Tier martial artists whose only advantage was in numbers? He gave a long hiss and charged towards the black-uniformed group.

Ma Lang did not interfere. Instead, he started to circle around Ling Han and said, "I have to admit that you surprised me by actually having a pill that could cure the poison especially concocted by Little Poison Lord. I think you must have gotten your hands on an ancient treasure trove, one that not only contained valuable pills that could help a martial artist increase his cultivation rate greatly, but also high level medicinal pills that could cure all poisons. Otherwise, your cultivation level would not have progressed so quickly. You wouldn't have been able to be completely unscathed either under the influence of the Origin Shattering Powder."

However, all this now belongs to me!" He turned a gaze overflowing with greed at Ling Han.

But Ling Han only responded with a smile, and said, "The only thing you can get is... death!"

"Damn you!" Ma Lang cursed, and threw himself at Ling Han. He wanted to subdue Ling Han in order to force Ling Dong Xing to surrender.

Ling Han was naturally unafraid. With a "ding," he drew his sword from the scabbard. Then, he threw the scabbard to the side and raised his sword in a slash, displaying Sword Qi.

"What, Sword Qi?!" Ma Lang gasped in shock. He immediately retreated, and could not help the deep frown crossing his brow. He looked at Ling Han, and said, "I never thought that you would have actually managed to form Sword Qi! You were initially a trash, yet now you have even managed to form Sword Qi. I am now really more and more expectant... the treasure trove that you had obtained must be of absolutely astonishing value!"

"Now, I need to display some of my true abilities." He withdrew a bent saber from his waist, brandished it a few times, and actually displayed a flash of Saber Qi too. He revealed an arrogant expression, "You're not the only one who can form 'Qi'!"

Those who could form "Qi" had the right to be proud of themselves.

Ling Han shook his head, and said impatiently, "How long are you intending to keep chattering for?"

"Heng, you will regret saying these words!" Ma Lang threw himself up, the bent saber in his hand drawn. "Xiu xiu," a flash of Saber Qi danced. It seemed as if he had struck twice in one instant. Together with the power he had as a martial artist in the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, the power behind his blows was truly terrifying.

Liu Yu Tong could not help her hands clenching into fists, revealing an anxious expression.

She knew that Ling Han was very powerful, but Ma Lang was not Hang Zhan. Ma Lang was in the sixth layer of Element Gathering

Tier, which was five whole layers above Ling Han. In her opinion, this gap was not something that could be compensated by martial arts techniques or experience.

But Ling Han looked so confident that she could not bear to stop him. She could only worry from the side, wanting nothing more than to fight in his place.

Ling Han gave a hump. His long sword once again slashed and two flashes of Sword Qi rolled out.

"Two flashes of Sword Qi!" Ma Lang's eyes were about to pop out of his skull at this. What kind of terrifying comprehension level was this? But he immediately snorted coldly in his heart. So what if Ling Han could form two flashes of Sword Qi? He was a martial artist in the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and possessed an overwhelming power advantage. This was definitely not something an additional flash of Sword Qi could overcome.

The saber he had raised did not change in position, and mercilessly struck down on Ling Han.

"Ting!"

The saber and the sword clashed, suddenly producing fiery sparks due to the friction between the two blades. Sword Qi and Saber Qi clashed as well, but they canceled each other out. However, there was still an additional flash of Sword Qi that continued on its path towards Ma Lang.

"Pu, pu," blood blossomed suddenly on Ma Lang's chest. He stumbled backwards, his face filled with disbelief.

"You have just entered into Element Gathering Tier, but how is it possible that you have such tremendous power?" He gasped in shock. When their blows clashed, he managed to estimate that his opponent's power belonged to someone in about the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

To get from the second layer of Body Refining Tier to the fifth

layer of Element Gathering Tier in a short two months?

This was something that Ma Lang could not accept in the slightest.

"Because I am a genius!" Ling Han brandished his sword, continuing his attack.

Ma Lang gritted his teeth. The word "genius" was something that he frequently used, and now it was snatched by someone else. He was naturally very displeased at this. Yet his opponent, at the mere age of sixteen, had already managed to break through to Element Gathering Tier, and even succeeded in forming two flashes of Sword Qi! Ling Han really did deserve the name of "genius"!

"Damn it!" He did not believe in the slightest that a piece of trash had suddenly attained enlightenment. It must be because Ling Han had obtained that mysterious treasure trove that allowed an idiot to become a genius.

This caused his desire to obtain it for himself to soar even higher.

"This is mine! Mine!" His eyes had turned red, jealousy turning him mad.

"Xiu," he pounced with his bent saber slashing out, and a bright flash of blood red flickered.

"Scarlet Trained Kill!" he shouted loudly. This was his ultimate technique and was also one of the secret techniques of Stone Wolf Sect that could never be taught to others. It was a high level Yellow Grade technique!

If he had not been the favorite disciple of Seventh Elder, he would never have been taught this saber technique while he was still in Element Gathering Tier, as this was a secret technique that could only be used by the Elders--in Stone Wolf Sect, high level Yellow Grade martial arts techniques were the best secret techniques they had, and according to rumors, only the Sect Master had the right to cultivate their one and only Black Grade

martial arts technique.

Stone Wolf Claws, a low level Black Grade martial arts technique. It was also the origin of the Stone Wolf Sect's name.

The saber's light was bitingly cold, and the flash of Saber Qi, as well as the real saber, had become crimson and struck towards Ling Han from two different directions.

Ling Han drew his sword, and used the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts. The two flashes of Sword Qi danced together, and were not the slightest bit less grand. Against a mere Ma Lang, he still did not need to put in all his effort and use all four flashes of Sword Qi.

"Ting ting ting ting," the saber and sword clashed repeatedly. The power advantage Ling Han had with the additional flash of Sword Qi was very obvious. Every time they exchanged blows, Ma Lang would definitely be struck by a flash of Sword Qi, causing wounds to continuously appear on his body.

Ma Lang was both astonished and alarmed. If things continued this way, Ling Han would slowly wear him down.

"Yu Zheng, help me!" he shouted loudly.

Chapter 45: Kill Them All

"Brother Ma, you asked me to help you place the poison, and I've already done so. Helping you deal with this brat... does not seem to be a part of our agreement," Yu Zheng said slowly, as if he had not seen that Ma Lang was suffering.

Ma Lang knew that Yu Zheng was also a greedy man; he was no longer interested in the benefits he had promised him previously. Though he was reluctant, he could only say, "This brat must have discovered some kind of ancient secret trove to be able to progress from the second layer of Body Refining Tier to Element Gathering Tier within a short two months. He has even managed to form two flashes of Sword Qi. Just think, how very valuable would this treasure trove be? Let us join forces to force this brat to reveal this treasure trove, and we'll split the contents between the both of us equally! Our future prospects would be beyond measure!"

Yu Zheng had only known that Ling Han was an extraordinary young man, but he had never imagined that this guy had been so weak in the past. With such a colossal discrepancy between his past and present, it could only be explained by the fact that he had obtained some kind of ancient treasure trove.

Even a piece of trash could obtain such a complete transformation, then what if it was he who had obtained this kind of treasure trove?

His breathing became harsh, and killing intent revealed itself in his eyes. His killing intent was even directed towards Ma Lang as well. As long as he managed to obtain that treasure trove from Ling Han, he would definitely kill Ma Lang to keep things quiet.

"Very well, I shall help you!" As he said so, he removed the bundle he had been carrying on his back. From within he withdrew two daggers. There was a greenish light flickering from the sharp blades of the daggers. They had been dipped in powerful poison.

"Yu Tong, get rid of him!" Ling Han said casually.

"Understood!" Liu Yu Tong replied. Xiu, her figure flew forwards, making her seem like a descending deity.

Too fast!

In a flash, she had already appeared behind Yu Zheng. Her right hand forced his hand up, and Yu Zheng could not control the brandishing of the dagger he had been holding, which drew against his throat.

"Pu!"

Blood splattered, and Yu Zheng stumbled back. He used one hand to press onto the wound on his throat as the other frantically searched through his sleeve for the antidote. But his face quickly turned black, and when he finally drew out a jade bottle from his sleeve, his eyes had already lost all signs of life.

"Peng," he collapsed with his head raised. Till his final moment, he still could not manage to believe that he would actually die here, and furthermore, that such a divinely beautiful, cold as ice maiden would actually have such great power that he had not even managed to display a single technique before death.

Ma Lang was extremely shocked as well. He too had not imagined that Liu Yu Tong would be so powerful, and even be able to instantly kill Yu Zheng, a martial artist in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, in one move.

Such a genius, why was she willing to lower herself to stay by Ling Han's side?

"You still dare to be distracted at such a time, are you complaining that death is not coming fast enough?" Ling Han smiled coldly, and brandished his sword in a killing move.

Ma Lang raised his saber to parry in panic, yet was still forced to retreat about seven or eight steps by the shockwave from this move. Another wound appeared on his body.

"Let me see you off!" Ling Han brandished his sword once again, like a rainbow piercing through the day, presenting a dazzling image. [ED/N: Day or sun, quite ambiguous; day is more likely though]

This was the strongest move of Shocking Electricity Sword Arts, named Flash Strike!

Ma Lang gritted his teeth and raised his saber in a parry. But the saber missed, and with a "pu", he only managed to feel a sharp pain in his chest. His heart had been pierced through by the long sword, and the terrifying shockwave generated by this attack immediately exploded his heart.

Martial artists in the Element Gathering Tier had a strong vitality. Even though his heart had been exploded, he was not completely dead yet. He kept staring at Ling Han and his mouth opened and closed a few times, as if wanting to say something, yet he did not manage to produce any sound at all.

"After such a long battle, how could it be that I have not managed to seen through your moves?" Ling Han knew what Ma Lang wanted to ask, and replied calmly.

'You're a damn monster, we've only battled just a short while, and you've actually seen through my moves?'

Ma Lang was spitting out curses in his heart, and he finally breathed his last, unwillingly closing his eyes in death.

Ling Han withdrew his sword, and glanced over the scene. Ling Dong Xing had dealt with majority of the law enforcers, and even if any of them were so fortunate as to get away from him, Liu Yu Tong would immediately deal with these leftovers.

Meanwhile, Ling Zhong Kuan and his grandson, Ling Mu Yun, had also died under the powerful effects of the poison. Their eyes were fixed in a stare, filled with a powerful rage, though who knew who was it they hated the most--Ma Lang and Yu Zheng or Ling

Dong Xing and his son.

"These two traitors, they've gotten off lightly!" Ling Han humped. He had initially intended to kill the two of them himself.

"It's fine, they are, after all, clansmen of the Ling Clan. Dying in the hands of outsiders is good," Ling Dong Xing only sighed. He was, after all, the Clan Head, and so there were many more things he needed to consider.

They naturally need not deal with the bodies themselves. However, killing someone was easy, but dealing with the aftermath... Ling Dong Xing had a bit of a headache at this.

"Han'er, you and Yu Tong must immediately leave, go as far away as you can!" Ling Dong Xing had decided. He could remain behind and die with the Ling Clan, but his son was the hope of the clan. At the very least, he needed to ensure that Ling Han remained safe.

Ling Han smiled, and said, "Father, I had not done this act out of impulsiveness. We can let Chen Feng Lie deal with this issue."

"So many people have died, and there's even a disciple of Seventh Elder. Can he really solve the issue?" Ling Dong Xing asked, frowning.

"For the sake of his own life, he would definitely do all he can," Ling Han laughed. "Moreover, Yu Tong is the princess of the Liu Clan, one of the Eight Great Clans of the imperial city. If worst comes to worst, we can reveal her identity."

Yet Ling Dong Xing still shook his head. He naturally thought of his son as the best young man in the whole world, but would the Liu Clan think the same? When he recalled that his own wife was also the great granddaughter of the Third Elder of Winter Moon Sect, yet in the end, their conclusion was tragic... there was already a previous example.

Still, they really are real father and son, even the women they got

to know were of such high, noble status.

He could not help feeling a little worried. As a father, he did not hope in the slightest for Ling Han to follow in his footsteps.

"Right, Yu Tong?" Ling Han had never been a father, so he would not be able to understand Ling Dong Xing's current thoughts. He saw how Ling Dong Xing still looked very worried, and misunderstood his father was still worrying about the issue of Stone Wolf Sect, so he asked Liu Yu Tong for assurance.

"En!" Liu Yu Tong nodded, her expression extremely solemn.

When Ling Dong Xing saw this, as someone who has had previous experience, how could he not be able to tell that Liu Yu Tong had already developed feelings for his son?

Hopefully this will not be another pair of star-crossed lovers! No, this will definitely not be an ill-fated romance, his son was better than him by a hundred, a thousand times, and in the future, he'd definitely be able to exceed the limitations of martial arts of Rain Country. So what would be inappropriate in marrying the daughter of one of the Eight Great Clans?

Ling Han immediately wrote a missive, and had a messenger deliver it at full speed to Stone Wolf Sect, addressed to Chen Feng Lie. If Chen Feng Lie was unable to deal with this matter, then he actually had an alternative solution, and that was Zhu He Xin. Zhu He Xin was a low-level Black Grade alchemist. Although he did not have a very high opinion of him, but within Rain Country, Zhu He Xin possessed quite a high status. At least he was someone that the Stone Wolf Sect definitely did not dare to trifle with.

...Liu Yu Tong was his little female attendant. It would be very embarrassing to be forced to make use of her background.

Chen Feng Lie received the letter on the third day. When he had finished reading the contents of the letter, he had almost been shocked to the point of heart attack, thinking how was it that this

young master could be such a troublemaker? He had just killed off one Cheng Xiao Yuan, and now he's also killed Ma Lang and a whole law enforcement team.

Cheng Xiao Yuan was fine. He was Chen Feng Lie's disciple, and so what if he's dead? It's fine as long as Chen Feng Lie did not intend to pursue matters. But Ma Lang was Old Seventh's disciple, and was also the most excellent one of them. How could he bury this pit?

But he had no choice but to do it, for his life was tied to Ling Han.

Ling Han did not know how Chen Feng Lie had dealt with the issue. He only knew that two days later, the latter replied to his message and said that there was no longer any need to worry about anything.

Since this matter was already resolved, Ling Han decided to enter Seven Wind Mountains. There was still one month before the end of the year, and he needed to achieve at least the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier to have a chance to compete for the first place in the Da Yuan Tournament.

Chapter 46: Entering Seven Wind Mountains

The Seven Wind Mountains encompassed a very wide area. From east to west, they spanned close to a thousand miles, while from south to north, they covered close to four hundred miles. It was the largest mountain range in the northern region of Rain Country. There were many demonic beasts inhabiting the mountain range, and there was also a large variety of different Spiritual Medicine growing here. Sometimes, some precious metals that could be used to forge high-grade weapons were also discovered here. As a result, there were many who entered here for training trips, as well as many whose target were the numerous treasures in this place. However, the annual death toll amongst those who entered the mountains here was also very high.

Some died under the fangs of demonic beasts. Some died because of some dangerous environment they found themselves in, while there were also some who were killed by their fellow human beings.

Although no one had actually counted the numbers, most believed over half of the deaths that occurred in Seven Wind Mountains was due to being murdered by other humans. Therefore, the most dangerous existence within Seven Wind Mountains was not any kind of demonic beast, but man.

A day later, Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong arrived at Yellow Bridge Town. From here, they could directly enter the mountain range.

Because the journey this time round was quite far, they had traveled here on horseback. The two of them stayed one night in an inn in the town, and subsequently left their horses at that inn before setting out towards the mountain range with only a simple bundle on their backs.

...If they were unable to return within a month, then the inn had

the right to sell off their horses. The money earned from the sale would cover the payment to the inn for holding onto their horses for a month.

The early morning sun hung high in the sky, its rays shining on the still remaining dewdrops, reflecting a variety of exceptionally beautiful colors and thus presenting a scene full of life. This was a wild, primitive, colossal mountain range. Although there were many people exploring the depths of the mountain range every single day, compared to this gigantic mountain range, the large number of visitors was really insignificant.

As Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong breathed in the fresh air around them, they both experienced an indefinable sense of relaxation.

They traveled all over the mountain range in search of the rock cave that had been mentioned in the rumors. However, they had searched for five days, and although they did find many caves, all the caves they found only led to disappointment.

That was reasonable, though--if that cave could be so easily found, then wouldn't it have long been discovered by others?

'En?'

Ling Han's steps suddenly paused. He heard some sounds of battle.

"Let's go take a look," he said. This was his second life yet he still could not change his curious nature.

They followed the sounds and quickly arrived at the bank of a little brook. In the clearing some distance in front of them, there were two groups of people who were currently engaged in a deadly battle.

"This is really a small world!" Ling Han shook his head. He knew one of the parties that were currently fighting.

...They were Liu Dong, Chen Peng Ju, Zhu Xue Yi and the others. They had joined forces previously at Balance Mountain to obtain

the Green Spiritual Fruit. However, as Hang Zhan's incident happened soon after, the five of them were also scared off. He never thought he would see them again here.

Out of the group of five, Liu Dong, Li Hao and Zhu Xue Yi had all broken through to Element Gathering Tier while Chen Peng Ju and Zhou Chang had also progressed to the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. Their improvement was very evident.

After all, they had each respectively gotten one Green Spiritual Fruit.

Yet, though their side had three elite martial artists in Element Gathering Tier, they were still at a disadvantage as the other side had four martial artists in Element Gathering Tier.

Three against four--they were at a disadvantage in numbers; added to the fact that they had just broken through to Element Gathering Tier and thus their power was still quite weak... if it was not for the fact that their opponents seemed to want to capture them alive, they would have long been finished.

"Why won't you quickly surrender to avoid suffering too much?" One of their opponents said. There were four members in the other party, and all of them possessed a fierce look to them. It was obvious that they have had a lot of experience in this area, and were filled with killing intent.

Liu Dong and his group made no answer, but continued to keep up their defenses.

In the past, the strongest one of the group of five was Li Hao. It was no different now. He brandished his saber repeatedly, every wave undaunted by the gap in power between the two groups. Each slash of his saber had an air of determination to it. It was also thanks to his presence that the group of five managed to hold on until now.

Yet he had also attracted the concentrated attention of two of

their opponents. "Pu pu," with two powerful blows, two wounds appeared on his chest and back respectively, and blood splattered.

Li Hao gave a loud roar and his eyes turned blood red, revealing an increasingly maniacal air, as if there was something about to explode from within him.

Ling Han could not help exclaiming softly in surprise.

"What is it?" Liu Yu Tong asked. A battle at this level naturally did not deserve her full attention.

"That guy is really quite talented, he's almost able to form Saber Qi," Ling Han said, pointing at Li Hao.

"Saber Qi!" Liu Yu Tong could not help being shocked. Whatever "Qi" it was, this kind of power was very difficult to form. However, it was common sense for many elite martial artists that under extreme emotional pressure, it would be much easier to form "Qi".

For example extreme joy or grief, or perhaps endless slaughter, or maybe the depths of despair. However, she had always possessed an icy demeanor, so she had never experienced such extremes of the emotional spectrum. As a result, she has not managed to form Sword Qi.

...According to her knowledge, that elder in her clan had managed to form Sword Qi due to the great grief he experienced after his wife had died of an illness.

Now Li Hao had actually reached the point where he was close to forming Saber Qi. So how could she not be both shocked and envious?

Ling Han smiled, and said, "You don't have to be discouraged. With my careful guidance, you too will very quickly be able to form Sword Qi. This isn't anything difficult!" To him, the difficulty was in forming Sword Ray, while grasping Sword Heart was the real challenge.

Isn't anything difficult?

Liu Yu Tong almost rolled her eyes in response. In the whole of Rain Country, how many people had actually managed to form "Qi"? Even in her Liu Clan, there were only seven clansmen who had managed such a feat!

Ling Han smiled. This girl naturally had no idea how colossal the East Star was. The strongest warriors of Rain Country were possibly only in Flower Blossom Tier... Rain Country could be considered a "backwater place".

In the wider world, there were innumerable geniuses. There would definitely be no small number of those who had managed to form "Ray", and even "Heart".

"Are you not going to help them?" Liu Yu Tong could not hold back from asking.

"This is that guy's rare opportunity. If he is unable to form Saber Qi through this experience, then the next time he gets this kind of chance will be maybe five years, or even ten years later," Ling Han said, shaking his head. "Let him face a bit more pressure."

Liu Yu Tong frowned slightly. She did not have such an optimistic opinion of Li Hao. It was possible for him to be killed at any moment under the violent, relentless attacks of the enemies rather than form Saber Qi.

"Don't underestimate the will and determination of human beings. Under extreme pressure, there is a possibility one will erupt with inconceivable power!" Ling Han smiled. He could not help remembering that in his last life, he had really been overprotected. Concocting and taking medicine allowed him to easily progress through the tiers.

It was when he started to travel all over the world in search of ancient sites that he realized that he had such a weak grasp of his own actual battle prowess. The dangers and perils of all the ancient sites he visited also managed to forge his strong determination and willpower, as well as increase his combat experience.

It was only from then onwards that he could really be considered as a powerful warrior.

"Shua!"

A bright flash of the saber streaked across the air, as if proving Ling Han's words. Li Hao, who had initially been forced into a dangerous corner, actually displayed a surprising saber skill. What was even more surprising was that there was actually an accompanying flash at the same time the saber was brandished. It looked as if he had brandished two sabers at the same time.

He had not brandished two sabers. The second flash of saber was.... Saber Qi!

"Pu!"

None of those fighting could've imagined that Li Hao would have been able to display a flash of Saber Qi. One of his opponents had received the blow, and as the Saber Qi streaked across, blood immediately spilled from a wound on the other's left shoulder.

Chapter 47: Clues

"Good!" The morale of Liu Dong and the other three was uplifted by this strike, yet Li Hao's figure staggered. His Origin Power had long neared the point of complete exhaustion. This last slash was, in reality, merely his despair and rage he unleashed. He had never imagined that he would actually form Saber Qi in this attack.

But he was no longer able to continue the battle. His right hand dropped to his side, and the saber almost slipped from his fingers.

"Boss, this brat can actually form Saber Qi, we definitely can't let him live!" One of the enemies immediately shouted.

The boss of these four people was a large man with deep brows who had two missing fingers on his left hand. He nodded and said, "This brat will become a big trouble for us in future. Just kill him then. We'll just have less money to extort."

"Hehe, just add a little bit more extortion money for the other four cash cows. It should be enough to cover for this guy's share."

"Maybe his corpse would be worth a few coins."

The four of them talked amongst themselves. Although they had initially been shocked by the flash of Saber Qi Li Hao had revealed, they very quickly regained their composure. After all, in this battle, they possessed an absolute advantage in terms of power.

"Flee, I'll cover your retreat, guys!" Li Hao said deeply, using all his strength to raise the saber he was still holding, his gaze determined.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk... the power of love is truly great," Ling Han clicked his tongue in praise. From their previous encounter, he could already tell that Li Hao liked Zhu Xue Yi. The reason he had been able to form a flash of Saber Qi just now... it likely was because he was worried that the object of his feelings would be hurt and suffer, leading to an extreme emotional upheaval.

Of course, extreme emotional upheavals were not a requirement for forming "Qi". However, under such conditions, humans are often able to fully realize their potential, thus some who had enough talent would be able to form "Qi".

"Now, can you make your move?" Liu Yu Tong rolled her eyes at him again. She kept feeling that this guy's actions were always much too mature, not a bit like those of a typical sixteen-year-old.

Ling Han gave a long whistle, and leaped out.

"Ling Han!" When Liu Dong and his group saw him, their expressions were first of joy, yet quickly followed by disappointment. It was because, during their past encounter, Ling Han had only been in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier. From then until now, only two months had passed--how could it be possible that Ling Han had broken through to Element Gathering Tier within a brief two months' period?

If that was so, then even if he was now in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, he would still be unable to battle with a martial artist in the first layer of Element Gathering Tier on even terms. This was the ironclad rule of martial arts.

They looked around once again, hoping to discover another's figure--Liu Yu Tong was an elite martial artist in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. If she was here, then they'd all be saved.

"Ai!" Ling Han gave a deliberate sigh, and said, "The looks on your faces now make me very sad!"

"Brat, who do you think you are?" The enemies' boss that had missing fingers shouted at Ling Han. His gaze was wavering as he did not know Ling Han's prowess, but judging from the fact that Ling Han only seemed to be about sixteen or seventeen years old, there was no way that he would be too powerful, right?

"I'm Ling Han, son of the Ling Clan's Clan Head from Gray Cloud Town," Ling Han introduced himself.

"Boss, we've got another cash cow here!" One of the lackeys said.

The boss with missing fingers laughed wickedly. In his opinion, Ling Han had to be one of those spoiled young masters who had an exaggerated idea of their own abilities and no idea of the perils of the real world! Thinking in this manner, he naturally would not take Ling Han seriously, and said, "You brat are really quite nice to especially deliver money to us, why don't you quickly come here and surrender obediently?"

"Hahahaha!" His group of four laughed raucously.

Ling Han was all smiles, and said, "I don't think the four of you are nice at all, why don't you obediently extend your necks and I'll gift each one of you with a slash?"

"What a self-important brat, the kind of person I hate the most is this type of spoiled young master!" One of the lackeys pounced at Ling Han while brandishing a large cleaver in a slash aimed at Ling Han's head.

"Old Four, don't be too merciless, that's a cash cow there!" The boss with missing fingers reminded.

"Hehe, I'm just going to cut off this brat's arms," Old Four said, and when the large cleaver lowered, the blade came down at a slight angle and, indeed, it was aiming at Ling Han's arm.

Ling Han drew his sword. "Xiu," the sword flashed, and the cleaver flew high up into the air while that man called Old Four was also forced to fly backwards due to the shockwave from Ling Han's parry. But he had just flown back some distance when his head separated from his neck, and a gushing stream of hot blood sprayed out.

"What!"

Seeing this, the other three bandits were dumbstruck. Liu Dong and his group were also shocked numb.

Was this really Ling Han?

Two months ago, this guy was just in the seventh layer of Body Refining Tier, yet now? That Old Four had to be at least in the second layer, or even third, of Element Gathering Tier and his individual strength could overwhelm them easily. Yet he was killed in one strike by Ling Han... what kind of disparity was that?

Since Ling Han had drawn his sword, there was no way he would be merciful. His figure moved sharply and charged towards the boss with missing fingers and his two other fellows.

"Old Four must have been too careless!"

"That's right, he's just a little brat, how strong could he be!"

"Let's kill him to avenge Old Four!"

The three of them pounced while brandishing their respective weapons, and as their blades waved about wildly, they created a big commotion.

Unfortunately, in front of Ling Han, they were all much too weak.

Out of the group of three, aside from their boss with missing fingers who was in the third layer of Element Gathering Tier, the other two were both in the second layer. In front of Ling Han whose prowess was comparable to that of a martial artist in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier, what could they do? This was the constraint of a difference in stages. Any martial artist would know very well how big the gulf between the power of one stage and the next one was.

Ling Han didn't even have to use Sword Qi; he did not need to use Shocking Electricity Sword Arts either. Taking all opportunities provided by the gaps in their defenses, "shua shua shua," he instantly killed them--one bandit with each strike. The boss with missing fingers didn't even get a chance to beg for mercy before the whole group was completely obliterated by Ling Han.

Liu Dong and his group felt like they were dreaming.

They exhausted all means available and only managed to survive for over half a day against the boss with missing fingers and his lackeys--and that was mostly due to the fact that they had wanted to capture Liu Dong and his group alive for extortion! But what did Ling Han do? He killed them, one enemy with one strike, as if it was a piece of cake.

In the past, there indeed had already been a gap between their battle prowess, but how could it have become so colossal?

"Ling Han, no, Big Brother Ling, thank you!"

"It's really thanks to you, otherwise, we would have been in deep trouble!"

They were stunned for a moment before hurriedly gathering around Ling Han to thank him.

Ling Han smiled and exchanged pleasantries with them. Liu Yu Tong also came out from behind the bushes, and the atmosphere quickly became lively.

"Why are you guys here?" Ling Han asked. This Seven Wind Mountains was extremely dangerous. If it wasn't for the fact that there was Earth Dragon Grass and a Red Scaled Dragon Snake here, he wouldn't even consider coming to this place. After all, who could guarantee that the demonic beasts in Spiritual Ocean Tier wouldn't suddenly feel like taking a walk around the territories of weak demonic beasts?

"The Da Yuan Tournament is going to begin very soon and so we wanted to do as much as we could to increase our individual abilities. We came here to see if we might be lucky enough to pick some spiritual medicine growing all over the place here," Chen Peng Ju said.

Ling Han could not hold back a loud laugh and said, "Are you guys perhaps thinking that just because you discovered a plant of Green Spiritual Fruits back at Balance Mountain, the heavens are

looking favorably on you and you'd also be able to get a large haul here?"

Liu Dong and his group looked embarrassed. Zhu Xue Yi pouted, and said, "Don't remind us. We are really very unlucky this time. Not only did we not find any spiritual medicine, we had even accidentally fallen into a cave that had heavy Yin Qi; there were bones, human and animal alike, littered all over the place."

Ling Han started. It couldn't be that these five guys had coincidentally fallen into the cave the Red Scaled Dragon Snake inhabited, right?

If that was true, then their luck was indeed extraordinarily good!

Chapter 48: Den of the Great Snake

"Where is that cave?" Ling Han asked.

"Wait, you want to go to that demonic place?!" Liu Dong immediately shouted.

Ling Han smiled softly and said, "Aren't you guys here to search for a fateful encounter? There could be one at that place. Oh, that's right, you guys probably didn't venture too deeply into that cave, right?"

"Of course not. There were bones all over the place. It looked like a mass grave. Once we saw it, we fled," as a girl, Zhu Xue Yi naturally need not fear that saying such words would make Ling Han laugh at them.

"You guys are really fortunate," Ling Han nodded. Had these guys been even slightly more curious and ventured deeper into the cave to see what kind of creature had devoured these people and animals, they would've very likely never come out.

"Is there really a great opportunity there?" Cheng Peng Ju asked a bit expectantly. Currently, only he and Zhou Chang had not yet broken through to Element Gathering Tier.

"Possibly," Ling Han nodded. That cave could be the lair of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake, or possibly some other kind of savage demonic beast. As he had not yet seen it with his own eyes, it was difficult to make an accurate guess.

When he saw the eagerness displayed on the faces of the five of them, he said, "However, great opportunities usually go hand in hand with great danger. You guys need to think it over carefully."

The four of them exchanged looks and, after a while, they finally said, "We'll at least take you to that cave for now."

The group set off on their path, and Ling Han said to Li Hao, "Congratulations, now that you've formed Saber Qi, you can be

considered to have finally stepped onto the first step of the path of a saber wielder."

Saber Qi!

When Ling Han said this, Liu Dong and the others were reminded that Li Hao's last attack had actually managed to form a flash of Saber Qi. Liu Dong, Chen Peng Ju and Zhou Chang were uncontrollably envious, while Zhu Xue Yi's face was filled with joy.

Li Hao laughed in a simple manner. Before he had even begun his path of cultivation, he had already been practicing saber skills. He had immersed himself in the path of the saber for thirteen years, and his deepest desire was to be able to form Saber Qi. Unfortunately, he had never managed to do so.

He had never thought that this would have been a blessing in disguise, allowing him to form Saber Qi in such dangerous circumstances. From now onwards, his path of martial arts would definitely be bright beyond imagination!

It could even be said that even if he went to Hu Yang Academy and showed off his Saber Qi there, he'd definitely be gladly welcomed as a disciple.

"Big Brother Ling, let's have a spar!" Li Hao could not help feeling his fighting spirit rise, "However, you're not allowed to use your full abilities. Otherwise, your power would be much too strong."

Ling Han neither agreed nor rejected. He simply drew his sword and gave it a light wave.

"Shua," two flashes of Sword Qi appeared in a dance.

Li Hao instantly opened his mouth in a daze. After a while, he finally shook his head and said, "I'll never compare myself with a freak like you again!"

"That's right, this guy is a true freak!"

"To compare yourself with him is practically looking for trouble!"

Liu Dong and the other three said respectively, all of them completely convinced by Ling Han's absolute prowess.

Yet Ling Han was not so easily satisfied. Sword Qi was only the first step on the path of the sword; there was still Sword Ray and Sword Heart after that! In his last life, out of the seven ultimate warriors of Heaven Tier, one of them had been the most esteemed existence of sword arts. He began practicing with the sword at seven years old, forming Sword Qi at ten, forming Sword Heart when he was seventeen, and finally forming Sword Heart at the age of thirty-three. He was truly a grandmaster of sword arts.

His first life was done and over with. He had placed all his attention on the path of alchemy, and became an Alchemy Emperor, someone who had never appeared in the books of history and likely never would again. He was a competitive man. Since he had already decided to concentrate on the path of martial arts in this life, then he wanted to also become a true emperor of martial arts.

Da Yuan City was too small, and Rain Country itself was also too small, thus even those who had only managed to form Sword or Saber Qi would be praised as exceptional geniuses.

They were not too far away from that cave. Thus, after half an hour, they arrived at the face of a cliff, which was covered with damp moss. Because the cliff was facing away from light, they appeared to look dark-green in color.

"It's there!" Zhu Xue Yi said, pointing at one corner of the cliff.

Ling Han glanced over and saw that there was a very inconspicuous cave entrance there. If Zhu Xue Yi had not deliberately pointed it out to him, he would have definitely missed it.

"You guys wait here, I'll go take a look." He took a great leap and entered into the cave.

The environment here was extremely damp, and the ground slippery. If he wasn't careful, he might slip and slide all the way to the bottom of the cave. He cautiously advanced, observing his surroundings carefully and paying attention to any traces or clues.

Soon he arrived at the bottom of the cave and discovered a gigantic cavern. There were bones everywhere, and just as Zhu Xue Yi had described, they were bones of both humans and demonic beasts. They were giving out a rotting stench.

If anyone else had seen such a scene, he'd probably turn right around and flee back to wherever he came from.

Ling Han searched carefully and soon, among the pile of bones, discovered a crimson scale.

"It's indeed the Red Scaled Dragon Snake!" He could finally confirm it. He began searching again and eventually discovered a passage at one of the corners of the cavern. The passage's ceiling was only as tall as a normal man's height and it was also only wide enough to permit one person to enter at a time. A more powerful rotting stench was continuously wafting from within it.

"That big guy should be sleeping inside," Ling Han took a look at the scale in his hand; judging from its size, it definitely came from a mature Red Scaled Dragon Snake. He bent it, but the scale did not split in half.

"Indeed, Red Scaled Dragon Snake has a thread of dragon blood in their line. That's why their scales would be so tough. Otherwise, demonic beasts in Element Gathering Tier definitely could not possess such a powerful defense."

He retreated out of the cave, brought Liu Dong and the others to a place farther away and said, "That cave is the lair of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake."

"Red Scaled Dragon Snake!" Liu Dong and his group were shocked. The Red Scaled Dragon Snake was a demonic beast in the

ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Furthermore, it was much stronger than any ordinary demonic beast in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. It definitely deserved the name of the Beast King amongst demonic beasts of Element Gathering Tier.

"The inner core of the Dragon Snake can be used to concoct Transcending Origin Pill--one pill will allow the user to increase his own cultivation level by one layer. However, it is only effective for martial artists whose cultivation levels is below the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier," Ling Han revealed the benefits first, then he said, "How about it, do you guys still want to continue?"

Liu Dong and his group all looked hesitant. On one hand, they all craved for greater power, but on the other hand, the Red Scaled Dragon Snake was not an easy opponent. If they weren't careful, they not only wouldn't be able to obtain the beast's inner core, but also become the prey of the great snake, and their bones would join the ever increasing pile in the cave.

Ling Han only looked at them with a soft smile. In truth, since he dared to venture here, then of course he was certain of his ability to handle the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. This was his test for the five of them.

...Because these five people had led him to the lair of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake, he wanted to reward them with a big gift. However, this would depend on whether or not they had the courage to obtain this opportunity.

The expressions on the five of them very quickly turned into determined looks, and they said, "Let's do it!"

"If we can manage to reach the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, then we would have a chance of squeezing into the top ten participants of the tournament at the end of the year! We'd be able to enter Hu Yang Academy then!"

"We have to take the risk!"

Ling Han nodded, and said, "No regrets?"

"We definitely will not regret it!" The five of them said loudly in unison.

"All right, then here's a mission for you, go catch a Bright Wool Sheep and bring it here," Ling Han said.

"Bright Wool Sheep?" Liu Dong and the rest stared blankly. Bright Wool Sheep was only a demonic beast of Body Refining Tier and there was nothing special about it. What did Ling Han want such a creature for?

Ling Han smiled and said, "Bright Wool Sheep is the favorite food of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake."

Chen Peng Ju had not yet reached the conclusion. He dimly asked, "Why do we have to feed that great snake?"

"Stupid!" Zhu Xue Yi immediately knocked him on the head, "If we place some kind of drug in the body of the Bright Wool Sheep, then wouldn't it end up in the stomach of that great snake?"

"Oh, that's right!" Chen Peng Ju scratched his head. His suddenly enlightened expression caused everyone else to laugh loudly.

Chapter 49: Battling the Dragon Snake

Everyone proceeded to carry out their assigned tasks--Liu Dong and his group went off to hunt the Bright Wool Sheep while Ling Han took out a variety of medicinal ingredients, preparing to concoct a particular drug.

It was only an Alchemy Emperor like Ling Han who could handle medicinal ingredients well enough to be able to concoct a drug targeted specifically against a particular creature. The drug he was concocting now could be considered harmless to any other living creature, but for the Red Scaled Dragon Snake alone... it was deadly.

In many situations, alchemists were also poison masters. For example, the Little Poison Lord, Yu Zheng. However, his ability was far, far beneath Ling Han's.

Although the Bright Wool Sheep was not a powerful demonic beast, its flesh was extremely delicious. It was not only the favorite prey of many other demonic beasts, it was also considered a delicacy for human beings. As a result, their population in the area dwindled--it was not an easy matter to actually find one.

After a whole three days had passed, Liu Dong and his group finally returned. Chen Peng Ju was carrying a creature that looked like a mountain goat on his back. It had a gorgeous woolen coat that looked like the finest brocade.

They had finally captured a Bright Wool Sheep.

Ling Han fed the drug he had concocted to the Bright Wool Sheep before making a gash on one of its legs. He then threw it into the lair of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake.

...The great snake's sense of smell was quite powerful. The smell of blood would definitely cause it to wake up from its deep slumber, and since the Bright Wool Sheep was its favorite food, it

wouldn't be able to hold back from coming out to enjoy another big meal even if it was already full.

Why did they have to use a living prey? That's because each Red Scaled Dragon Snake was very cautious by nature. Unless the prey was something it had killed itself, it would definitely not eat it.

After Ling Han came out of the cavern, he retreated with others some distance away; they hid behind a boulder nearby so that the great snake wouldn't discover their presence once it came out of the cavern.

Not long after, they felt the ground tremble beneath them, as if some colossal beast was going berserk nearby.

It was the Red Scaled Dragon Snake.

"Peng!"

A gigantic red-colored snake weaved out of the cavern's entrance as if it was an arrow shot from a bow. Its diameter was bigger than that of a bucket, and it was also extremely long. Whatever they could see of its body was already pushing close to a hundred metres yet there was still no sign of the end of its tail.

There were two fine membranes protruding from the great snake's neck. Currently, the two membranes were trembling, producing a weird "wu wu wu" sound.

Finally, the entire body of the great snake was out. Its total length was about two hundred metres and its whole body was covered with crimson scales. Each scale was about the size of a bowl's lid. It seemed to have gone mad and was continuously ramming into obstructions in all directions. Its long tail was like a whip, shattering many of the surrounding boulders in the course of its rampage.

"How come that thing's not dead from the poison yet?" Liu Dong and his group gasped in shock. They were completely unable to comprehend it.

"Duh! That's a demonic beast in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier! Moreover, it has inherited a shred of the dragon's bloodline, and has been acclaimed as a ruler among demonic beasts of the Tier! How could it die so easily!" Ling Han said, shaking his head. If it was that simple to kill it, he would not have needed to wait until he had reached the peak period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier to come here.

"Oh no, it's noticed us!"

That great snake had a very strong sense of smell, so even if Ling Han and the others had concealed themselves in a spot downwind of it, the snake had still discovered their presence. It immediately weaved its gigantic body and charged towards them.

"Si si!" The great serpent's tongue flickered, and the two membranes at the sides of its neck trembled, producing a weird sound. A rotting stench wafted over.

"Yu Tong, let's join forces, we need to detain it!" Ling Han did not feel fear at all. He simply drew his sword and threw himself forward.

Liu Yu Tong did not respond. She simply followed Ling Han closely, and for the first time, drew her weapon of choice.

She was also a sword user.

The two of them worked together with their swords brandished in a dance, aimed at the Red Scaled Dragon Snake.

Theoretically speaking, Liu Yu Tong had also achieved the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so she should not be at a disadvantage in terms of power when facing this great snake. However, the Red Scaled Dragon Snake possessed a thread of the dragon's bloodline, so whether in terms of brute power or defense, it was still stronger than any other being at the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Even Liu Yu Tong was not qualified to battle it head on.

It was a ruler of this cultivation tier, and only other rulers of the tier possessed the ability to battle it one on one!

Ling Han possessed the Five Element Origin Nuclei and his power similarly exceeded those of the same cultivation level, so he did have a right to the name 'ruler'. The problem was that his current cultivation level was still too low!

Even if the two of them were working together, they were still forced to jump and dodge in all directions, proving the great power this serpent possessed.

"Be patient, it's already poisoned, so it can't hold on for much longer. But we definitely can't allow it to flee," Ling Han said.

"En!" Liu Yu Tong nodded.

Ling Han used all his abilities, and every wave of his sword would form four flashes of Sword Qi. "Pu, pu, pu, pu," four wounds appeared on the body of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. On the other hand, his actual sword itself didn't even manage to penetrate the scales of the great snake.

This was the power of Sword Qi, and this was also why it was something that every self-respecting swordsman would revere greatly. And when they saw the four flashes of Sword Qi Ling Han had just displayed, Liu Dong and his group were completely stunned, their mouths agape; they were absolutely speechless.

However, the great snake's counterattack was also extremely swift and fierce. Its tail whipped and the shattered rocks shot out at a terrifying force, causing bloody spots to continuously appear on Ling Han's body.

Ling Han didn't even make a single sound of pain at this. On the contrary, he started to stimulate Lone Wolf's Blood within his body.

"Weng," the Five Elements Origin Nuclei within his Dantian began rotating at a greater speed, causing his power to increase. At

the same time, the circulation of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll allowed his wounds to begin recovering at an extremely rapid rate.

The circulation of these two different techniques, along with the fierce battle he was now in, caused the Origin Power within Ling Han's body to be consumed at a very fast rate.

For any other person to battle at his full strength, he might be able to last for about half an hour, but for Ling Han, ten minutes was already his limit.

But, he had already long anticipated this situation and so prepared a large number of medium level Return Origin Pills for himself. Should he start feeling that his Origin Power was flowing out, he'd take one of the pills; there shouldn't be any problem for him to continue battling for about twenty minutes with his current supply of pills.

They had to detain the great snake by all means...

...for he had concocted the drug to especially "aim" at the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. The serpent had a Yin nature, so he had prepared a large store of medicinal ingredients that possessed a Yang nature or were of fire alignment, causing Yin and Yang within the snake's body to conflict, damaging the life force of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. But it was also very easy to cure this poison. As long as it dived into a river, using the water to extinguish the flames raging within its body, it'd be able to completely recover after three or four days by simply resting.

Under the influence of its instincts, the Red Scaled Dragon Snake would definitely go off in search of water, so they needed to stop it here by all means. If it wasn't for this, Ling Han would have had the whole group hide somewhere further away and wait for the Red Scaled Dragon Snake to die before returning to collect their rewards.

After the battle had persisted for a while, the great snake's initial rage passed and it became restless instead. It felt as if an inferno

was raging within its body, causing it to feel the pressure of death closing in. It no longer attacked fiercely but its head turned around instead, intending to flee.

"Where do you think you're going!" Ling Han quickly waved his sword in a slash. He had entered Seven Wind Mountains firstly for the Earth Dragon Grass, and secondly, for the inner core of this great serpent so that he'd be able to concoct the Transcending Origin Pill. If he wanted to advance his cultivation level in a short period of time, he needed to depend on the external support of this medicinal pill.

"Pa," the great serpent gave a wave of its tail, creating a terrifying shockwave. Although its tail had not directly hit Ling Han, the shockwave produced caused Ling Han to fly backwards.

The ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier was indeed powerful!

Ling Han felt rueful. The higher the cultivation level, the more difficult it was to skip cultivation levels when challenging someone. Element Gathering Tier was still fine, but once he reached Gushing Spring Tier, even the difference of one layer would be an immeasurable gulf. If he, with a cultivation level of the first layer of Gushing Spring Tier, battled against an opponent in the ninth layer of Gushing Spring Tier, he'd be instantly obliterated in one move. There was no way he'd be able to prolong the battle for even slightly longer.

Liu Yu Tong produced a light whistle as her long sword freely waved like rain, and a high level Yellow Grade sword arts unfolded. Her attack was like rain, and effectively parried the Red Scaled Dragon Snake's blow.

Chapter 50: A Breathtaking Sword

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong had already started taking pills like mad.

The pills Ling Han had been taking helped him replenish his Origin Power while the ones Liu Yu Tong had been taking were meant to speed up the recovery of wounds. A head-on clash with this kind of demonic beast was practically seeking death, and she had already sustained considerable internal injuries within a few short minutes of battle.

Thankfully, the pills Ling Han concocted were of excellent quality and allowed her to maintain her battle prowess at her best condition. Furthermore, because of Lone Wolf's Blood, her battle prowess was still on a soaring rise.

...Ling Han had taught it to her some time ago.

With the increasing battle prowess she possessed further enhanced by the circulation of the Lone Wolf's Blood, Liu Yu Tong could just about handle a head-on clash with the Red Scaled Dragon Snake.

If the Red Scaled Dragon Snake had not been poisoned, then the losers of this battle would definitely be Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong. But things were different now. They only needed to hold on for twenty minutes.

As the battle persisted, the Red Scaled Dragon Snake became more and more frantic. The conflict between the Yin and the Yang in its body was becoming even more intense, and there were already many places on its body that had exploded. Green-colored blood splattered everywhere. It had a corrosive nature--falling on the rocks littered around, the blood actually melted the rocks at an extremely quick pace.

There was also poisonous gas floating around in the air that

could easily poison and kill a martial artist in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier!

If it did not possess such awe-inspiring abilities, how could it be labeled the ruler of Element Gathering Tier?

Rulers were, of course, invincible!

Unfortunately, it had encountered Ling Han.

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong had already taken antidotes, and the powerful poison only caused them to feel slightly dizzy, not having too much effect on their battle prowess.

"Si si!" The Red Scaled Dragon Snake could feel death approaching and began to attempt to flee recklessly. In its eyes, it only needed to solve the problem within its body, and then dealing with these two insignificant human beings would be a cinch.

Liu Yu Tong was enraged too. She brandished her long sword like she was holding a rainbow in her hand, as if she was a battle goddess displaying her heroic beauty.

The great serpent did its utmost to flee, while Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong did their utmost to stop it from fleeing. If they missed this chance, the Red Scaled Dragon Snake would definitely not be fooled next time and they'd have to wait until Liu Yu Tong broke through to Gushing Spring Tier before coming again.

A large river appeared some distance ahead.

The Red Scaled Dragon Snake seemed to understand that the river's water would cure its poison and instantly became energetic, increasing the speed of its escape. Even if it suffered attacks from Liu Yu Tong, it did not attempt to counterattack even once. It seemed to have made its decision to do its utmost to slip into the river.

A flash of absolute determination crossed Liu Yu Tong's eyes as she raised her sword high up and lightly shouted, "One sword of Heaven's Martial Arts determines the Universe!"

"Xiu," she waved her sword, and it was almost as if wielder and sword were as one, slashing towards the neck of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake.

Ling Han's expression changed and he shouted loudly, "Don't be reckless!"

This slash was much too powerful and the Red Scaled Dragon Snake dared not receive it head on. Otherwise, it was highly likely that the great serpent would be killed by this one slash. It gave a loud hiss, and the serpent's body quickly coiled in place, concealing its head within its coiled body to protect it.

"Pu!"

The long sword lowered quickly in a slash, and a flash of Sword Qi was revealed, which actually chopped the body of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake in two; green blood instantly gushed out like a spring.

The great serpent twisted all over the ground in agony. Close to one third of its body near to its tail had actually been chopped off by this sword slash of Liu Yu Tong!

"Pa," Liu Yu Tong's delicate figure wavered, and she fell down towards the ground.

Ling Han quickly leaped up to catch the icy beauty before she hit the ground. He frowned and said, "Are you crazy? You actually forcibly squeezed your Origin Nucleus to increase your own battle prowess! If it exploded, you'd lose your life!"

"I managed to form Sword Qi! Did you see, I formed Sword Qi!" Liu Yu Tong said weakly, but excitedly. At that moment, there was only one thought in her head, and that was to obstruct the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. She could not disappoint Ling Han.

With the support of this conviction, she actually broke through her own limits and managed to form Sword Qi.

"You silly girl, if you dare to do something like this again, I'll

smack your behind!" Ling Han lifted Liu Yu Tong onto his back. The Red Scaled Dragon Snake's energy was now close to being completely spent. Although the river was not too far away, it could no longer reach it.

A red flush appeared on Liu Yu Tong's beautiful, cold face, but she plastered her face onto Ling Han's back. Hearing the strong beating of his heart, her mind was empty of any stray thoughts.

The Red Scaled Dragon Snake was still twisting around on the ground, yet the extent of its movements was becoming smaller and smaller; finally, it no longer made any movements.

Yet Ling Han did not make any impulsive moves. A centipede dies but never falls down, and the serpent was extremely long. Moreover, this Red Scaled Dragon Snake was considered within the ranks of kings!

"Big Brother Ling!" Liu Dong and his group raced over. Their faces were filled with astonishment, and when they looked at Ling Han, it was as if they were looking at some kind of monster.

How could they not be astonished?

Although the Red Scaled Dragon Snake had been poisoned, its battle prowess had not weakened; Ling Han actually managed to battle with it for such a long time. Even if the main attacking force had been Liu Yu Tong, this was still an unbelievable feat.

If it had been them in his place, one whip of the great serpent's tail would probably be enough to make them all die in one go.

"Is Miss Liu all right?" they asked.

"She should be all right," Ling Han smiled. With an Alchemy Emperor like him nearby, as long as she still had one breath within her, there was no way she would die. He was just about to have Liu Dong and his group watch over her and the serpent while he enters the cavern to pluck the Earth Dragon Grass when he suddenly spotted a few people coming out from the bushes on the river's

banks.

There were six people in total, and the one in the lead was a young man. The others were five men dressed all in black and seemed to be of different ages. From the looks of it, they were the lackeys of the young man.

"Hahahaha, it's an actual Red Scaled Dragon Snake!" The young man rubbed his hands and laughed loudly, "That's why I said we should come over here and check things out when we heard the commotion! We actually encountered such a good thing."

"Young Master's good fortune is as high as the sky!" The five men in black said in unison, showing off their abilities of currying favor.

"Quickly carry this great serpent back for me, I'll let Grandfather see how great I am!" The young man immediately commanded.

"Understood!" The five men in black walked towards where the Red Scaled Dragon Snake was lying.

The six of them were speaking amongst themselves as if they had completely not seen that Ling Han and the others were also here.

"Hey, we were the ones who killed that Red Scaled Dragon Snake!" Zhu Xue Yi shouted loudly in anger.

Li Hao had already drawn his saber, preparing to step forwards to stop them.

Yet Ling Han raised one hand to stop him from advancing further, and said, smiling, "You don't have to do anything!"

Li Hao and the others couldn't understand him. Could it be that Ling Han really intended to surrender the Red Scaled Dragon Snake just like that? But Ling Han did not seem at all as if he was that kind of person. Previously, even though he had known Hang Zhan had been the grandson of the Seventh Elder of Stone Wolf Sect, he had still done as he had said and killed the man. His brow hadn't even twitched back then.

When the young man on the other side saw this, his face was filled with an expression that told them this was something common to him. Because of his identity, it was absolutely normal for other groups to yield to him.

Yet it was at this very moment that the situation changed drastically!

The Red Scaled Dragon Snake that seemed to have completely died actually coiled up! Its head shot out and bit one of the men in black, snapping him in half, whilst its body coiled and constrained the other four tightly.

This was its final attack before death. As it gathered all its remaining strength to carry it out, it was extremely powerful.

"Ka ka ka," the sound of bones shattering continued for a long time; the four people who had been trapped in the snake's coiled body were instantly squeezed into a lump of flesh and blood, which had all mixed together into an indefinable lump--there was no way to identify who was who now.

Meanwhile, the man the great serpent had bitten in half was only left with two legs that walked a few steps in different directions before they fell down with a "pa".

"Pa," the Red Scaled Dragon Snake once again lay down on the ground, and this time, it was finally dead.

Chapter 51: The Third Young Master of the Feng Clan

It was but a single instant, yet five elites of Element Gathering Tier were all killed!

Such was the might of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake.

The young man was so scared that his face had turned completely white and his whole body started shaking. He was not a genius of martial arts, and such a bloody scene caused him to almost throw up his bile. This caused Liu Dong and the others to break out into uncontrollable laughter.

Compared with him, Liu Dong and his group were frequent visitors of various perilous and hazardous areas. There was a considerable number of martial artists and demonic beasts that have died by their hands.

When the young man heard their mocking laughter, his face twisted, and pointing at them, he asked, "You dare to laugh at me?"

"What about it?"

"Heng, since my servants have all died, then you guys will be responsible for hauling this great serpent back for me!" the young man commanded.

Liu Dong and the others exchanged looks, wondering if there was something wrong with this guy's head.

"How dare you! I am the Third Young Master of the Feng Clan of Da Yuan City, Feng Luo, and my elder brother is Feng Yan, a true disciple of the Hu Yang Academy!" The young man screamed.

Feng Clan!

Liu Dong and his group revealed expressions of dread. While they were all members of the younger generation of the Great Clans of Guo Rock Town, how could they be compared with the Great Clans

of Da Yuan City? These Great Clans all had powerful warriors of Gushing Spring Tier to watch over the clan, and were definitely no weaker than the Stone Wolf Sect.

Moreover, the elder brother of this Feng Luo was actually a true disciple of Hu Yang Academy, and that was really a terrifying fact. Hu Yang Academy was the assembly point of all the young geniuses of Rain Country, and the top hundred disciples all had a high chance of becoming powerful warriors of the Spiritual Ocean Tier... not to mention, what were true disciples? True disciples were the top thirty disciples of the academy!

In their case, cultivating up to Spiritual Ocean Tier was practically guaranteed!

To oppose someone who would become a powerful warrior of the Spiritual Ocean Tier in future.... who on earth would not feel fear in this kind of situation?

"Is this Feng Yan very powerful?" Ling Han turned to Liu Yu Tong and asked.

"Very powerful!" Liu Yu Tong nodded, her beautiful face revealing a serious expression, "I heard that Feng Yan just broke through to Gushing Spring Tier three years ago, and he was twenty years old at the time. Now, he is already at the peak period of the third layer of Gushing Spring Tier, and chances are high that he would advance further in a very short period of time. Additionally, he's already succeeded in forming Saber Qi, and though it's unknown how many flashes he can form, it's definitely not less than three flashes."

That was a shocking rate of progress.

For an ordinary martial artist in Gushing Spring Tier, it was already a very impressive feat to be able to advance one layer within five years. There were some that have spent ten years and only managed to reach the next period, and for them, they would never be able to breach the high fence surrounding the fourth

layer in their whole lives.

Before a martial artist reached Flower Blossom Tier, he would only have a lifespan of a hundred years. As a result, if he wasted too much time on such a "low level" tier like Gushing Spring Tier, then his future prospects would naturally be limited.

Feng Yan spent three years and managed to break through by three layers. If he maintained this kind of progression rate, then he'd be able to break through to Spiritual Ocean Tier by the time he's over thirty years old, and possibly by the time he's sixty or seventy years old, he may even be able to advance one step further and break through to Spiritual Pedestal Tier!

At that moment, he'd deserve to be praised as a royal existence of Rain Country, because the strongest warriors in Rain Country publicly known were only in Spiritual Pedestal Tier; though there were rumors that there was an ancient freak who was even stronger and was the overseer of Rain Country who kept the country from falling.

With such a calculation, Feng Yan's potential for greatness could be imagined. No wonder Feng Luo was so arrogant.

"Oh!" Ling Han casually replied. He naturally did not think of Feng Yan as any kind of serious threat. He patted Liu Yu Tong's shoulder, smiled and said, "I guarantee that you will become stronger than him!"

Liu Yu Tong nodded. She had full confidence in Ling Han--and in herself.

The cultivation technique she was practicing now was a Heaven Grade cultivation technique, and together with her high level Heaven Grade Spirit Base, she did not lose to anyone in terms of inborn circumstances--of course, there was no way she could compare to a freak like Ling Han.

She did not know that there was still such a thing as Immortal

Grade Spirit Base in this world, and had no idea that Ling Han was actually an Alchemy Emperor. By his side, she could completely become a pill bottle, relax in comfort and watch as her cultivation level kept climbing.

"Did you hear what I said, quickly haul this Red Scaled Dragon Snake back for me!" Feng Luo said, extremely pleased with himself. Based on his past experience, as long as he announced his elder brother's name, the other party would immediately become very obedient.

Ling Han shook his head, and said, "I despise people like you the most!" He strode towards Feng Luo.

"Big Brother Ling, don't be too rash!" Liu Dong and his group quickly said. They were really scared that Ling Han would do something like what he had done previously, and go on a murderous rampage.

"Don't worry, I just want to give him a good thrashing!" Ling Han said with a smile. After all, Feng Luo only wanted to snatch their possession, and had no intention of killing anyone or any other kind of dirty thoughts. Otherwise, Ling Han would definitely not be merciful.

"You, you dare!" Feng Luo could not help stepping back.

Although they shared the same mother, Feng Yan was a genius of martial arts while he himself did not have any particularly significant talent in this field. It was as if all the essence had been absorbed by Feng Yan. Feng Luo himself was now only in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, and this cultivation level was likely thanks to medicinal pills he had taken. However, he still had not managed to advance further. After all, Green Spiritual Fruits were quite rare.

"So what if I dare?" Ling Han raised his leg and kicked him. Feng Luo started to howl terribly, and after Ling Han gave him a few good kicks, Feng Luo's nose was bloody and his face was swollen. If

he saw his own reflection in a mirror, he probably wouldn't recognize himself anymore.

He did not even dare to leave any fierce words. He simply fled with his tail behind his legs.

Ling Han split open the Red Scaled Dragon Snake and carved out its roughly fist-sized inner core. It was as red as fiery flames.

Liu Dong and his group, out of curiosity, all gathered and reached out to touch it, but once their hands came into contact with it, their expressions changed and they quickly retreated, gasping for breath. Only Li Hao did not retreat, but he had also immediately withdrawn his hand, as if he had been electrified.

"The Red Scaled Dragon Snake possesses a thread of dragon blood, and can claim to be a king of a tier. It is well capable of suppressing martial artists and demonic beasts of the same cultivation level. Only those who have managed to form "Qi" can resist it," Ling Han explained.

If it had not been for this, then Liu Yu Tong, who had also been in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, wouldn't be completely at a disadvantage in a head-on clash with the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. It was all because she was suffering under this suppression. But if she and the great serpent battled once more now, Liu Yu Tong definitely would not have been in such dire straits. This was because she had now managed to form Sword Qi and thus possessed the preliminary qualifications to battle the great serpent on an even footing.

There were rulers of demonic beasts, and there were also rulers of human martial artists. As long as one managed to form Qi, they could be considered to have begun their journey on the path towards being a tier's ruler. However, only those who have managed to form "Heart" could proclaim themselves rulers.

"You guys remove the backbone of this snake. Technically, it can also be considered dragon's bones. The spinal cord is very effective

in refining one's physique," Ling Han delegated the tasks to Liu Dong and his group while he and Liu Yu Tong once again entered the cavern. He still had to pluck the Earth Dragon Grass, after all.

Liu Dong and his group were all very excited. A strong physique meant that defense would also be upgraded. This was a real, solid benefit.

They immediately started working in high spirits.

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong entered the cavern and advanced through the hidden passage. The environment here was very damp, and because the Red Scaled Dragon Snake had been residing here for a very long time, there was a very powerful stench of blood hovering in the air.

Thankfully, the passage was not very long, and very quickly, a gigantic cave appeared in a distance ahead.

"Found it!" Ling Han found only one plant in the middle of the cave. The plant only had a single stem, completely without any branches or leaves. The stem was not straight; instead, it wound and twisted, seeming like a divine dragon that was craning its neck in expectation of soaring towards the heavens.

Earth Dragon Grass!

Chapter 52: Transcending Origin Pill

Ling Han was overjoyed. This stalk of Earth Dragon Grass was at least over two hundred years old. It would not only become an ingredient for the Transcending Origin Pill, but also improve the effects of the completed pill. If this was how it was, then even if the other main ingredients he had on hand were a bit insufficient in age, this would compensate for it.

He carefully dug out the Earth Dragon Grass. As long as the main stem was undamaged, the medical effects of the Earth Dragon Grass would not decrease. Additionally, it could also be preserved for a very, very long time.

"Congratulations, you are one step closer to the day of Uncle Ling's recovery," Liu Yu Tong said. She now also knew about how Ling Dong Xing's Spirit Base had been crippled.

Ling Han's face was filled with joy. If everything proceeded as smoothly as things had this time, then within one, or maybe two, years he could heal Ling Dong Xing's Spirit Base and allow him to once again advance on the path of cultivation.

The two of them came out of the cavern. While Ling Han got ready to start concocting the alchemical pill, Liu Dong and his group were boiling the bones of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake. Aside from the inner core, the bones were the most valuable part of the great serpent.

"This can't be, this guy even knows how to concoct pills?" When they saw Ling Han take out a very small alchemy furnace, the faces of Liu Dong and his group began twitching uncontrollably.

"He's really a monster!"

"Yeah, his advancement in cultivation levels is inhumanly fast, and he's even managed to form four flashes of Sword Qi! But now, he can even concoct pills... I really don't know what else to say

anymore."

"Forget it, let's not compare ourselves with a freak."

"We won't compare anymore! Never again!"

The five of them continuously shook their heads. Even Li Hao, who had managed to form a flash of Saber Qi, shook his head, looking like a rattle-drum. To compare yourself with a freak, wasn't that just seeking your own humiliation?

Ling Han's alchemy techniques were a blur to their eyes. Currently, his Origin Power was abundant, so he did not need to keep taking pills during the concocting process. Additionally, the eruption effects of his Five Elements Origin Nuclei were astonishing, allowing him to control the furnace's heat even more smoothly and easily than before.

After only one hour, he stopped his movements. The Transcending Origin Pill, done!

There were thirteen pills in total.

"This is the Transcending Origin Pill. Taking one would allow you to advance one layer," Ling Han said. He took eight pills for himself, and handed the remaining five over to Liu Dong and his group.

Theoretically, he only needed two pills to reach the peak period of the third layer of Element Gathering Tier, but the effects of this Transcending Origin Pill were tailored for "single nucleus" martial artists. Who knows if the Five Elements Origin Nuclei needed double or even more than that the amount? Thus, to avoid complications, he kept an additional six pills.

Liu Dong and his group did not express any disagreement about Ling Han taking the lion's share of the rewards.

Are you kidding? How much work had they actually done for this reward? They had only been responsible for capturing a Bright Wool Sheep! Such an easy task, who on earth would fail at it? They

knew very well that Ling Han had gifted them each with a Transcending Origin Pill because they had pointed out the location of the cavern to him. This was Ling Han's token of appreciation for their aid.

Otherwise, who would be so generous to do such a thing? They didn't have such a close relationship after all.

One pill would allow the one who consumed it to advance one layer.... if this pill was sold, what kind of astronomical price would it be worth?

Ling Han, Liu Dong, Li Hao and Zhu Xue Yi immediately took their respective pills and proceeded to digest the effects while Liu Yu Tong was responsible for standing guard over them. Chen Peng Ju and Zhou Chang could only watch enviously from the side. Thankfully, the Transcending Origin Pill wouldn't suddenly grow wings and fly away, so when they have broken through to Element Gathering Tier, they'd also be able to use it.

Ling Han sat down beside some bushes at one side. After he had consumed a Transcending Origin Pill, the Spiritual Qi from all around him surged towards him. His Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus fluttered slightly and began to absorb the Spiritual Qi like mad. His cultivation level immediately began to shoot up.

He had already reached the peak period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, and under the large volume of concentrated Spiritual Qi, he immediately began to solidify the second origin nucleus.

Five pinpricks of light appeared from nothing, and slowly transformed into five rotating nuclei. Then, their speed of rotation gradually increased, and they quickly increased in size. It was also during this process that the space within his Dantian also started expanding in order to accommodate even more Origin Power.

The size of the space within a martial artist's Dantian decided the amount of Origin Power a martial artist could store, thus it was

very important. For Ling Han, its importance had increased by a few times because he possessed the Five Element Origin Nuclei, which granted him with power that exceeded his own actual cultivation level. However, the toll it took on his ability to store Origin Power was also naturally overwhelming.

He required a space within his Dantian that was at least a few times larger than other martial artists' of the same cultivation level. Otherwise, he'd only be a one-trick pony, only able to display his overwhelming prowess once and very quickly becoming exhausted.

Of course, as long as he managed to obtain first place in the Da Yuan Tournament and get his hands on the Dark Moon Grass, he'd be able to concoct the Spatial Pill. This was something even powerful warriors of Heaven Tier would be jealous over. To him, who was only in Element Gathering Tier, how many times would the Spatial Pill expand the space in his Dantian?

The problem of limited Origin Power storage would thus be solved.

The greatness of the Immortal Grade Spirit Base was fully evident here as the Spiritual Qi absorbed by his Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus was indescribably plentiful; the Transcending Origin Pill stimulated the speedy growth of his origin nuclei, allowing his cultivation level to increase like crazy.

Second layer of Element Gathering Tier--early, middle, late, peak period.

The speed of his advancement was hair-raising!

Ling Han nodded to himself. Although his Origin Nuclei was equivalent to five times of a normal person's Origin Nucleus, it did not expend additional medicinal effects. When he thought about it, it was natural. Although his Origin Nuclei was equivalent to five times a normal person's Origin Nucleus, he still had the Immortal Grade Spirit Base, so how fast would he be at absorbing Spiritual

Qi?

Immortal Grade Spirit Base was originally synonymous with rapid cultivation rate, so how could it be possible he'd be held back by it?

At this moment, the medicinal effects of the first Transcending Origin Pill were completely used up.

Ling Han opened his eyes and instantly felt a raging hunger. It seemed he had unknowingly been cultivating for a whole day and night.

On another side, Liu Dong and the other two were also almost done with their cultivation. Their faces all revealed exhilaration though they had each advanced to different stages.

Liu Dong and Zhu Xue Yi had reached the peak period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, whereas Li Hao had reached the early period of the second layer. Their innate abilities differed, so there was also a difference in the results of absorbing the medicinal effects of the Transcending Origin Pill.

Ling Han was slightly optimistic about Li Hao. To be able to form Saber Qi at this age was proof of his great potential, and facts have also proved that he was talented. Ling Han decided to spare some time and effort to nurture this man.

Perhaps, there would appear a Saber King in future because of his decision!

At this time, the bones of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake were also done, and the essence of the bones had mixed with the soup. It was gold in color and produced a strange aroma.

"This is extremely nutritious! Come, come, come, let's all have ourselves a grand feast!" Ling Han gathered the others and started to distribute the soup amongst themselves. They had also grilled the snake flesh, and though its effects were far beneath those of the snake bones, it would at least fill their stomachs.

The seven of them started to eat without reserve.

Although the Red Scaled Dragon Snake did not have a high grade, but still, kings of demonic beasts were not commonly sold in the marketplace. Even Liu Yu Tong had only eaten such a delicacy twice. Even she, a princess of a Great Clan, was so, thus Liu Dong and his group were even more eager for such a rare meal.

Not long after, they had drunk the whole pot of soup until nothing was left. They all felt that their stomachs were extremely full and bloated--as if even one more bite and they would burst.

This was natural. The bone marrow of the Red Scaled Dragon Snake was equivalent to an extremely nutritious medicine. They felt this way because they have had too much nutrition.

The seven of them quickly sat down in cross-legged positions and started to digest this extremely nutritious food.

This could not help them advance their cultivation level, but would still help them strengthen their physiques. It was still extremely beneficial for them.

Ling Han circulated the Indestructible Heaven Scroll to absorb the medicinal effects of all he had consumed into every part of his body. A golden light actually started to flicker from his body. However, this glow was very faint, and if you didn't pay attention, you'd miss it completely.

'It's great!' He thought in his heart. The Indestructible Heaven Scroll could help him completely absorb all the benefits of what he had consumed, without wasting a single drop!

It was common sense that the food one consumes could not possibly be absorbed completely by one's body, especially for this kind of extremely nutritious food. That was because if the medicinal effects were too strong, they could not be digested within a short period of time. However, after one or two days, due to the natural processes of the body, the nutrition would be

naturally removed from one's body. How great of a waste was that?

"After I have finished digesting it, I'll definitely be able to cultivate the body of the Dead Tree from the Dead Tree Tier!"

Chapter 53: Body of Dead Tree

Another day passed.

Ling Han suddenly opened his eyes, a pleased smile turning up at the corners of his lips. He drew his sword and lowered the blade in a slash at his extended left hand.

If anyone had seen such a thing, they would definitely think he was committing self-mutilation, but after a while longer, they'd definitely be shocked to the point that their eyeballs were in danger of popping out of their heads, for as this slash encountered his hand, it did not leave a single scratch on his skin. The only proof of what he had done was a white line on his hand.

'Indeed, my defense has improved by a considerable amount,' Ling Han nodded. Although he had not poured Origin Power into that strike just now, he had also not used Origin Power to strengthen his defense. He had depended entirely on his physique's innate defense--without any external aid.

He increased the power of the strike, and simultaneously began to circulate the Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

The sword lowered once again in a slash, and this time it produced a gash on his hand. However, something even more bizarre appeared. Not a single drop of blood flowed from this gash.

'Haha, so this is the first layer of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, the Dead Tree Tier! The physical body would be like that of a dead tree, and even after being struck by a sword, the body would not bleed, nor would the essential lifeforce be damaged!' The smile on Ling Han's face became wider. The gash he himself had created was healing at a tremendously rapid pace and very quickly vanished. There wasn't even a mark left behind. This was an unbelievable feat. 'And this is only the Body of Dead Tree!'

Ling Han could not help feeling a bit rueful. Once he reached

Rock Cliff Tier and formed Body of Rock Cliff, then his skin would be as tough as rock. Even a heavy strike would not injure him one bit as his defense would have once again been upgraded to a new level. Iron Sheet Tier would be even more amazing, and his power would become even more tyrannical.

But when he finally achieved Diamond Tier, that'd be a fundamental change. Even a missing limb could be regrown, and his lifeforce would be so powerful it would be practically beyond reasonable limits.

'According to the scroll, I'd be able to condense a drop of Indestructible True Fluid once I reach Dead Tree Tier. In the future, no matter how heavy the injury I suffer, as long as I refine this Indestructible True Fluid, it'd heal instantly.'

Indestructible Heaven Scroll... it indeed lives up to its name!'

Ling Han did not immediately begin condensing the Indestructible True Fluid. This was a very time-consuming process, and was not something that could be completed successfully within a short period of time.

'Haha, once I've formed the Body of Dead Tree, my last and only weakness would be eliminated!' Ling Han was extremely overjoyed.

In this world, there were certain races that were powerful from birth. One such example was the Four Winds Race, who possessed jaw-dropping speed--even their members who were only in Element Gathering Tier could be considered to be on even footing with Gushing Spring Tier. Another example was the Sword-Armed Race, whose arms could transform into sharp blades. The higher their cultivation level, the sharper and sturdier their blade arms.

An even more powerful example would be the Wild Thunder Race. Their members were born with lightning surrounding their bodies, and thus their attacks were terrifyingly powerful.

This was labeled as special body constitution.

Whether in his last life or in his current life, Ling Han did not have such special constitution, but the cultivation of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll allowed him to acquire one. This was practically inconceivable, as it had broken the iron-clad rules of nature!

'Body of Dead Tree could only be compared to some lower grade special constitution; but if I actually manage to form Body of Diamond, then what race would actually be able to compare to this kind of special physical constitution?

In this life, I am destined to be invincible, to walk the path no one has ever walked before, to shatter the void and become a god!'

Ling Han collected his stray thoughts and glanced over at Liu Dong and the rest. The essence of the bone marrow of the Dragon Snake drained very quickly. If it still could not be digested within a whole day and night, then there would only remain less than one tenth of the nutrition in it. Thus, they practically wouldn't obtain much benefit at all.

Indeed, not long after, Liu Yu Tong and the rest completed their refinement process, and stood up one by one.

They were not cultivating the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, so naturally, it was impossible to completely refine all the essence of the bone marrow; still, all of them looked very pleased, as they had indeed obtained some benefits.

"Big Brother Ling, there are about ten days left before the new year, so we have to return."

"After the new year, let us meet again at Da Yuan City."

"Farewell!"

The five of them bade farewell to Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong. Though Chen Peng Ju seemed like he had something that he was hesitant to say. In the end, he still did not say a single word and,

with Li Hao and his group, walked further and further away into the distance.

Ling Han looked over at Liu Yu Tong and said, "How is it, how is your gain?"

"Very profitable!" Liu Yu Tong nodded, her beautiful face showing a joy that was difficult to conceal. "My physical defense has improved to a whole new level, and my bones, as well as my muscles' strength, have also improved considerably. If I battle with Cheng Wen Kun now, I can guarantee that I'd be able to kill him within ten moves!"

Demonic beasts that had a shred of a king's bloodline were much too rare, but the benefits they promised were also colossal. This was also why Ling Han had immediately raced over here once he had reached the peak period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier. If he managed to gain these benefits, then his actual power would naturally improve greatly, and the chances of victory at the Da Yuan Tournament at the beginning of the year would also increase dramatically.

Even for the Liu Clan that was considered one of the most powerful Great Clans of Rain Country, they still might not be able to get their hands on demonic beasts that had a king's bloodline. This kind of thing was completely dependent on fate and fortune.

Ling Han took the second Transcending Origin Pill and continued cultivation. He had also gifted Li Hao with two pills to give this young saber wielder a helping hand. However, just what extent Li Hao's future achievements would reach... that still depended on his own potential and willingness to work hard.

After he had refined this Transcending Origin Pill, he had also reached the peak period of the third layer of Element Gathering Tier. However, the effects of the Transcending Origin Pill also ended here. It could not help him to advance any further than this.

Normally, the higher one's cultivation level, the fewer pills there

were that could actually help one advance their cultivation level. For example, for Element Gathering Tier, a martial artist between the fourth and sixth layers needed to take "Revolving Origin Pill". However, this required the inner core of demonic beast kings that were in the Gushing Spring Tier.

To use the inner core of a king in Gushing Spring Tier to concoct a pill for a martial artist in Element Gathering Tier was much too extravagant.

He still had six Transcending Origin Pills in his possession. He decided to hand them over to Ling Dong Xing on their return home, and allow him to gift them to those exceptionally gifted clansmen within the clan.

"Let's also return home!" Ling Han said to Liu Yu Tong.

"En!" Liu Yu Tong graced him with an enchanting smile. Even she herself did not realize that her icy demeanor was slowly melting in front of Ling Han.

The two of them left the Seven Wind Mountains and returned to the inn they had kept their horses at. After paying the fees, they urged their horses on a return journey towards Gray Cloud Town.

They rode by day and rested by night. Ling Han took advantage of this time to begin condensing the Indestructible True Fluid and, after two days, formed a drop about the size of a grain of rice. Theoretically, the drop had to reach the size of a bean to be considered successfully condensed and possess the greatest possible effects, but it was still usable now--though the effects were definitely much, much weaker.

'Looks like I need about ten days to condense a single drop. However, the Da Yuan Tournament is also at the beginning of next year, so there'd be enough time. This will become one of my trump cards.'

Seven days later, they had returned to Gray Cloud Town, and

Ling Han had also successfully broken through to the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier. For him, this was really nothing too difficult. At this time, there were only about three days before the year's end, and almost all houses were decorated with lanterns and colored banners in preparation for celebrating the new year.

The Ling Clan Residence was also filled with an air of celebration. Because Ling Zhong Kuan had died, the Ling Clan was now completely under the control of Ling Dong Xing. Everyone was united, giving off a brand-new appearance.

"Young Master Han!"

"Young Master Han!"

When Ling Han passed by, all servants he encountered greeted him respectfully. This young man who was soon going to be seventeen years old was going to be the future backbone of the Ling Clan, and no one dared to underestimate him anymore.

"Han'er, you've returned!" Ling Dong Xing revealed a relieved expression, which quickly transformed into one of shock, and said, "Your cultivation level seems to have improved greatly again!"

"Fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier!" Ling Han said with a smile.

Ling Dong Xing's expression became very colorful, though he did not gasp in surprise this time round. In the end, he finally settled on a wide smile that was filled with gratification.

His son was freakishly talented--this was something he already knew. In the future, he only needed to feel gratified by Ling Han's continuous progress and that would be enough.

As a parent, wasn't this the greatest source of pride?

After this, the only big event remaining was the celebration of the new year.

Yet Ling Han did not relax, and continued to work hard at

cultivation every single day. He concocted some "Spirit Gathering Pills" for himself. This pill allowed him to increase the rate of his cultivation, and while the help it gave him was not much, every little bit counted.

Liu Yu Tong also displayed a strong talent in sword arts, and within a short period of more than ten days, actually managed to form another flash of Sword Qi.

Chapter 54: Heading Towards Da Yuan City

Ling Han did not feel this was odd in any way.

From the start, Liu Yu Tong was very talented in the field of martial arts. It was illogical that she had still not yet managed to form Sword Qi. Now that she has made a breakthrough in this area, it seemed as if the potential she had been accumulating gushed out in one go, producing excellent results.

However, the third flash of Sword Qi would not be so easily formed.

For Liu Yu Tong, she was already satisfied with being able to possess two flashes at the mere age of eighteen and stepping into the ranks of young rulers. Moreover, she could be considered to be among the stronger, more powerful young rulers.

...The general level of martial arts in Rain Country was too low. You'd be praised as a ruler once you manage to form Saber or Sword Qi.

When the New Year came, all the branch families of the Ling Clan returned to the Main Clan Residence to greet the coming of spring together.

Normally, these external branch families had their own residences outside the Main Clan Residence and were responsible for managing the clan's various businesses. Most of them were ordinary people. Only a few have stepped onto the path of cultivation. After all, for every ten people there was only one person that actually possessed a Spirit Base.

"Big Brother Han!" A little girl by the name of Ling Zi Xuan kept following Ling Han around. After the New Year, the little girl would only be eight years old, yet she had already awoken her Spirit Base. Furthermore, it was a low level Earth Grade Spirit Base. According to the rules of the clan, she was qualified to be

enrolled in the Gray Cloud Academy, and the clan would provide her school fees as well as cultivation resources.

Everyone knew that you wouldn't be able to protect your wealth if you didn't have enough power. As a result, every clan would carefully nurture the clansmen who were found to be gifted with talent to become martial artists. If there appeared a genius amongst these clansmen, it would also be a source of pride for the clan.

Just like the Eight Great Clans of the imperial city--they had all been merely small clans which grew by choosing such a policy.

There had been three members of the Ling Clan that had been enrolled in the Gray Cloud Academy previously. Aside from Ling Han and Ling Mu Yun, there was another named Ling Zhi Dao. However, as he was now getting too old, after the New Year, he would no longer attend the academy. Instead, he would join the Clan Guards. After a few years of gaining experience, he'd be promoted to Assistant Captain and then Captain.

Such an important post naturally had to be handed to a clansman for safety's sake.

Meanwhile, as Ling Zi Xuan had awakened, after the New Year, she would begin attending the Gray Cloud Academy.

However, Ling Han had other plans.

He could not possibly remain in Ling Clan forever. He desired to climb to the summit of martial arts in the future, so Rain Country was too small for him. As a result, before he left, he needed to nurture as many talented people as possible to help his father relieve some of his worries.

He has decided to bring Ling Zi Xuan to the Imperial City and enroll her in the Hu Yang Academy.

Ling Dong Xing had already obtained a place of enrollment in Hu Yang Academy previously, and Ling Han definitely would be able

to rank amongst the top fifty participants in the Da Yuan Tournament. In this manner, their clan would have two places.

Of course, he did not intend to become the babysitter of the girl. He would definitely have her parents follow her to the Imperial City to take care of her daily needs.

"Why are you crying again?" Ling Han smiled, as he picked up the little girl.

"Da Xiong is bullying Xuan Xuan!" The little girl said, full of grievances. "Big Brother Han, you help Xuan Xuan beat him up!"

Ling Han laughed heartily, patted the little girl's head, and said, "You and Da Xiong are both members of the Ling Clan, so you must help and support one another. Our fists should be aimed at outsiders, and not used to beat our own people up."

"But he said Xuan Xuan is ugly!" The little girl said, pouting.

"Our family's Xuan Xuan is so pretty. You're now a small beauty and in the future, you'd be a great beauty. Da Xiong is only jealous of you!" Ling Han said, smiling.

The little girl was instantly cheered by such compliments, and clapping her hands, she said, "Xuan Xuan is the most beautiful girl in the world!" After a moment of thought, she realized this was a bit too arrogant, so she changed her words and said, "Big Sister Yu Tong is the most beautiful, Xuan Xuan is the second most beautiful."

Ling Han gave a big laugh, and said to Liu Yu Tong, "She's praising you!"

"Big Sister Yu Tong, when are you and Big Brother Han getting married?" The little girl asked innocently, her head tilted.

Liu Yu Tong instantly blushed at this. She swiftly turned around and ran off, causing Ling Zi Xuan to feel very puzzled. What was going on?

"Xuan Xuan, you've scared off my wife, how are you going to compensate me?" Ling Han deliberately frowned and said.

Ling Zi Yuan bit at her fingernail, thought for a while, and said comfortingly to Ling Han, "Big Brother Han, Xuan Xuan will help you find a prettier Big Sister!" She looked extremely mischievous when she said this.

Ling Han could not hold back his laughter. Kids say what they like, and were innocent and adorable. It was too bad that this purity could not be preserved forever.

After the New Year celebration, Ling Dong Xing, Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong all set off towards the Da Yuan City to participate in the Da Yuan Tournament.

Da Yuan City was more than eight hundred miles away from Gray Cloud Town. The three of them hastened their journey, and two days later, they arrived outside Da Yuan City.

Compared with the small, tiny Gray Cloud Town, Da Yuan City looked very imposing and grand. The city grounds extended over a few tens of miles, and the city walls were about a hundred metres tall. It looked like a creeping colossal beast.

There were four gates of entry into Da Yuan City--North, East, South and West Gates. Every day, there would be travelers coming in from all directions to this most bustling, most lively city within the nearest thousand miles. There were merchants, refugees and wandering martial artists here.

The overall level of martial arts in the city was higher than the surrounding area by a whole new level. The current Da Yuan King was a powerful warrior of Spiritual Ocean Tier, and according to rumors, he was also the only one in Spiritual Ocean Tier, possessing ultimate power and prestige.

Ling Han and his group arrived at the city gate. They did not have to be searched or go through any kind of security check. They

only had to pay the city entrance fees--one silver coin per person. This was not very expensive for them, though for commoners, this would indeed be a very big sum.

Within the city, there were many tall, grand buildings of various heights extending into the distance. It was the epitome of a king's city, stunning any new visitors to the city.

Ling Dong Xing had come here a long time ago, and had even left the country before, so he naturally would not be shocked. Liu Yu Tong came from the Imperial City, so this was a common sight to her. The two of them had initially thought that Ling Han would be stunned by such a grand sight, yet Ling Han looked completely calm and unperturbed, shocking them.

They went off in search of an inn. However, it seemed as if many had come to the city to participate in the upcoming Da Yuan Tournament, and practically every inn was fully occupied. They walked around for over half a day, yet still had not managed to find a place of accommodation.

"Yi, Grandmaster Ling!" They had been walking around on the main streets when they heard a surprised voice call out. A white-haired old man walked over to them. He was Zhu He Xin.

"So you're here," Ling Han said, smiling.

"Grandmaster Ling, I happened to receive an invitation from an old friend during the New Year, asking me to come visit. I hope Grandmaster Ling will forgive me for not paying you a visit during the New Year," Zhu He Xin bent slightly at the waist, a hint of fear on his face.

He had already considered Ling Han as half his Master, so he would naturally be fearful that he had caused Ling Han's displeasure.

Ling Han shook his head and smiled, and said, "You don't need to call me Grandmaster, you can just call me by my name in future."

In this life, he had already decided to start from a minor character and walk firmly and sturdily onwards, battling various so-called geniuses to improve himself.

Otherwise, if he continued to be a Grandmaster Alchemist, then due to the grand, noble status accorded to an alchemist, which genius would dare to spar with him?

"This-" Zhu He Xin shook his head continuously. He was a person who was reverent of his master and his teaching. Ling Han had granted him a kindness in guiding him before, so in his heart, Ling Han was already his teacher. To directly address your teacher by his name without any kind of honorific... this was practically disgraceful!

"Don't say 'this' or 'that'. It's decided. If you call me Grandmaster in future, then I'd really be angry," Ling Han deliberately put on a stern face and said in a half-joking manner.

Chapter 55: Introduction

Zhu He Xin could not help feeling troubled, yet once he saw the determined expression Ling Han had on his face, he could only nod his head and say, "I shall obey Grandmaster's, no, Young Friend Ling's words."

In the end, he still could not bear addressing Ling Han without any honorific. At least the address "Young Friend Ling" sounded more polite.

"Oh, right, is Young Friend Ling here to take part in the Da Yuan Tournament?" Zhu He Xin asked.

Ling Han gave a nod, and said, "We aren't very fortunate, we still have yet to find a place of accommodation."

"Then why not come and stay at our Heaven's Medicine Pavilion?" Zhu He Xin's eyes immediately lit up and suggested to Ling Han.

"Is that suitable?" Ling Han had walked around for over half a day, so he really didn't want to tire himself anymore.

"Suitable, of course it's suitable!" Zhu He Xin said quickly. To be able to stay near to Grandmaster Ling, he'd be able to conveniently ask Grandmaster Ling for guidance in alchemy.

"Then we shall trouble you," Ling Han said, smiling.

"It's no trouble, no trouble at all!" Zhu He Xin walked in the lead, guiding them to the branch of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion in the city.

Unlike the small branch of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion in Gray Cloud Town, Da Yuan City's branch of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion was actually a heavily guarded, gigantic palace, and there were about a hundred alchemists stationed here--these alchemists were in charge of concocting a massive amount of pills every day, which were then delivered to be sold at places like Gray Cloud Town and

Guo Rock Town.

Ma Da Jun of the Gray Cloud Town's branch of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion was only in charge of overseeing things, and usually, he did not have to concoct any pills. Usually, these characters had lower rate of successfully concocting pills, so if they were given the same medicinal ingredients to be concocted into pills, it would be too much of a waste.

Low level Black Grade alchemists similarly had a very high, noble status in this place. All guards as well as the alchemists made their salutations respectfully when they saw Zhu He Xin approach.

The Branch Master of this branch of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion was called Zhang Wei Shan. He was also a low level Black Grade alchemist and had been friends with Zhu He Xin for many years. In the past, both had entered Heaven's Medicine Pavilion at the same time, and through many years of motivating and competing with each other, both managed to become low level Black Grade alchemists.

"Young Friend Ling, I have a presumptuous request," Zhu He Xin said a bit embarrassedly after he had made arrangements for them to reside there temporarily.

"You've encountered some problem in alchemy?" Ling Han said with a smile.

"Hehe!" Zhu He Xin was a bit embarrassed. Although he was already quite old, but in front of Ling Han, it seemed as if he was only a young brat who had just entered the field of alchemy. He did not think this was anything odd though.

He said, "Not me, it's an old friend of mine. He managed to obtain an old formula. However, because of the long passage of time, there are some words that can no longer be clearly read from the old formula. Thus, he has encountered some trouble when he attempted to concoct the pill."

Ling Han suddenly understood and said, "You want me to help you write down the complete formula?"

"I hope for Young Friend's guidance," Zhu He Xin said. "The name of this pill formula is "Reverse Pill", and it's very effective for healing wounds. If this formula is able to see the light again, then many people will be saved."

So it was Reverse Pill... could it be that even such ordinary medicinal pills have already been lost in the passage of time?

Ling Han felt that this was really strange. Whether martial arts, or alchemy, with accumulated studies and research of every generation, these two fields should have become stronger and stronger. Yet why had so many pill formulas been lost in the passage of time?

He nodded, and said, "Then I'll go take a look."

"This way please, Grandmaster!" Zhu He Xin immediately switched back to using honorifics. Only after the words left his mouth did he react and change his words as he said, "Young Friend, this way, please."

The two of them walked side by side and soon arrived at a residence in the palace courtyard. The door was ajar, and there were three people within--two old men and a young girl. The two old men were both seated and drinking tea while the young girl was standing behind one of the old men.

The young girl appeared to be about sixteen or seventeen years old. She was quite delicate and pretty. However, one corner of her mouth was slightly uplifted, and her big, black eyes looked extremely intelligent, so on the whole, she looked rather crafty.

Seeing Zhu He Xin, the two old men stood and smiled in greeting.

"Old Man Zhu, let me introduce someone to you!" One of the old men hurried over, and pointing at the other old man, said, "This is Duanmu Chang Feng. Brother Duanmu has been praised to excel at

both alchemy and sword arts; his Sweeping Cloud Sword Art is the best in the whole of Rain Country. You've admired him for a long time, right?"

When Zhu He Xin heard this, there was no way he could introduce Ling Han immediately. He raised his clasped hands in Duanmu Chang Feng's direction, and said, "Brother Duanmu, it's an honor to meet you at last."

"Haha, Brother Zhu, I heard that you had improved the Wind and Fire Pill just recently. I've long wanted to come and meet you, and today I've finally gotten the chance to," Duanmu Chang Feng said with a smile.

The other old man was naturally Zhang Wei Shan.

"Brother Duanmu, Old Man Zhang, let me introduce someone to you, this is—" Zhu He Xin intended to introduce Ling Han to the two of them.

"Old Man Zhu, now that I've invited Brother Duanmu here, perhaps with the combined efforts of the three of us, we may be able to patch up the pill formula for Reverse Pill within three months," Zhang Wei Shan said excitedly.

"Let me introduce—"

"Haha, Brother Zhang, you speak too highly of me. My main focus is on sword arts, and I have only lightly studied about alchemy. The main workforce will still be the two of you. I will just suggest ideas from one side," Duanmu Chang Feng said, once again interrupting Zhu He Xin.

The two old men had naturally thought that Ling Han was a junior of Zhu He Xin, and so did not really pay attention to him.

At that moment, the young girl walked over to Ling Han, and walked two circles around him. She kept making a clicking noise with her mouth, as if she was making some kind of appraisal.

"Are you Grandmaster Zhu's disciple?" The young girl asked.

"No!" Ling Han shook his head.

"Oh, then you must not have passed Grandmaster Zhu's test yet!" The young girl thought that she was being very conscientious, and in a very mature, experienced manner, patted Ling Han's shoulder, and said, "I have already been received by Grandmaster Zhang as a disciple so I will be your Elder Sister Disciple in future! Don't worry, I'll definitely take care of you! If anyone dares to bully you, just announce my name!"

Ling Han could not help smiling, and said, "Announce what name?"

"Ya, you don't even know who I am?" The young girl pressed one hand to her forehead, and shook her head repeatedly, "Ai, what rural village did you pop out from? I am Qi Zhan Tai, the Seventh Princess of the Royal House of Da Yuan!"

Ling Han gave an 'oh'. A mere princess was not someone who would make him lose his composure.

"Hey hey hey, what attitude is that, I am your Elder Sister Disciple!" Qi Zhan Tai said angrily.

"My two brothers, let me introduce to you an exceptional genius of alchemy!" It was only now that Zhu He Xin managed to find an opportunity to introduce Ling Han. He walked over to Ling Han and said, "This here is Ling Han, Young Friend Ling. To tell you the truth, the Wind and Fire Pill was successfully completed under the guidance of Young Friend Ling. If not for his assistance, it may have taken a few years before I could finally complete improving the pill."

"What!" Zhang Wei Shan and Duanmu Zhang Feng were both dumbfounded. They looked at Ling Han and turned to look at Zhu He Xin, feeling that all this was too unreal.

Qi Zhan Tai covered her gaping mouth with one hand. She had previously taken Ling Han to be Zhu He Xin's junior, but in the

blink of an eye, he had become Grandmaster Zhu's "Young Friend"... then wouldn't that mean he was her senior?

"Old Man Zhu, you're kidding, right?" Zhang Wei Shan called out immediately.

Zhu He Xin's expression turned solemn and said, "How could I possibly joke about this kind of matter!"

Zhang Wei Shan and Duanmu Chang Feng once again turned back to look at Ling Han, and this time, their stares were completely different.

Chapter 56: Who Wants Your Pill Formula?

So young!

Whether it was the field of martial arts or the field of alchemy, there has never been a lack of geniuses... but Ling Han was only how old?

Seventeen years old? Eighteen years old?

Even if he had been studying alchemy from the moment he was born, how many years of experience could he have accumulated at such a young age? And what alchemist had not gone through the process of concocting massive amounts of pills to accumulate experience before finally gaining recognition?

"So which aristocratic family specializing in alchemy is Young Friend the heir to?" Zhang Wei Shan asked very politely. He knew Zhu He Xin very well, and knew the it was impossible that the latter would actually make a joke about this kind of thing.

"I'm self-taught," Ling Han said. He was already the Alchemist Emperor, how could he be the heir to someone else?

Zhang Wei Shan was even more shocked, whereas Duanmu Chang Feng still thought that Zhu He Xin must be joking around. The most important thing in alchemy was inheritance. For example, in the case of pill formulae, without a Master or teachings of one's clansmen, how else would one have obtained them?

By pondering over it oneself? What a joke, all pill formulae were the accumulated result of multiple generations of alchemists' work. If one depended on their own efforts to create a completely new pill formula, then one may only be able to invent only one or two types after spending their whole lives hard at work--but there was no guarantee of the effects.

"Old Man Zhang, take out the pill formula for the Reverse Pill

first," Zhu He Xin urged. He believed that as long as Ling Han helped, it would definitely scare these two old men witless.

Zhang Wei Shan was slightly doubtful. Even if the formula for the Reverse Pill was not complete, it was still extremely valuable, and he had sacrificed a lot to obtain it. It was like a book of secret martial arts skills--who would easily show it to others?

"Brother Zhang, you can't!" Duanmu Chang Feng immediately shook his head. Even such an important man as he had sacrificed a considerable amount just to be able to have a glance at this formula, and that was still while taking into consideration the fact that he was assisting with the patching up work of the Reverse Pill formula. Otherwise, the price he had to pay would be even larger.

'Who does this brat think he is to be able to easily see the pill formula?'

Zhang Wei Shan looked at Zhu He Xin. It was not that he distrusted this good friend of his. It was just that Ling Han was really too young, making him feel that Ling Han wasn't very dependable.

"Old Man Zhang, you don't trust me?" Zhu He Xin was angered. This was a real Grandmaster Alchemist. Even he wanted nothing more than to follow Ling Han and benefit from his teachings. Unfortunately, he lacked the qualifications to be accepted by Ling Han as a disciple.

Yet Duanmu Chang Feng actually dared to doubt Ling Han's ability and think that the latter was not qualified to see the pill formula--how could this not enrage him?

If it was not for considering Zhang Wei Shan's face, he'd be picking a fight with Duanmu Chang Feng now.

Zhang Wei Shan frowned lightly. From the bottom of his heart, of course he was willing to trust Zhu He Xin. After all, they have been good friends for dozens of years, how could he not

understand what kind of person Zhu He Xin was? However, Ling Han was really much too young, so young that he didn't even look the slightest bit like a Grandmaster Alchemist.

"Good! Good! Good!" Zhu He Xin saw the doubt in Zhang Wei Shan's eyes, and was angered to the point that his chest was trembling. He said, "Zhang Wei Shan, since you don't trust me, then from today onwards, we will no longer be friends!"

"Old Man Zhu!" Zhang Wei Shan turned pale due to shock. Zhu He Xin had even said that he would break off their friendship, proving how furious he was. He hurriedly waved his hands and said, "Don't be angry, I'll take it out right now, all right?"

"You don't have to force yourself!" Zhu He Xin gave a hump. In his eyes, Ling Han was the Alchemy Emperor that stood at the top of the world and Zhang Wei Shan's attitude was already very disrespectful. As a result, he felt ashamed in front of Ling Han, so how could he still bear to ask Ling Han for help to patch up the pill formula?

"Young Friend Ling, I'm really sorry!" The old man said apprehensively to Ling Han.

Ling Han gave a wave of his hand before looking at Duanmu Chang Feng, and said, "Do you think, that I would consider the formula for the Reverse Pill important? Haha, then let me recite the names of some medicinal ingredients for you."

"Violet Smoked Leaf, Thousand Blossom Fruit, Windless Grass..." In one breath, he recited out more than ten different medicinal ingredients.

Duanmu Chang Feng was unable to make heads or tails of it... what on earth was he talking about? But Zhang Wei Shan's expression kept changing, and his hands had also started trembling, his gaze becoming more and more feverish.

How could he not know what Ling Han was saying? These were

the ingredients written on the pill formula for the Reverse Pill! However, there were three ingredients which could not be clearly read, and the quantities required for one of the ingredients had also been blurred.

Ling Han did not recite any other medicinal ingredients. All of the ingredients he recited belonged to the formula, and he had even recited an additional three ingredients--what did that mean?

That he had possession of the complete formula for the Reverse Pill!

What a joke, he had actually been so petty, and did not bear to take out a formula that was incomplete. He really felt so embarrassed that he wanted to find a hole to hide in.

"Young Friend, please forgive this Zhang Wei Shan's ignorance!" Zhang Wei Shan clasped his hands, and bowed so deeply that his head was at Ling Han's waist level, showing how respectful this apology was.

Ling Han was unmoved. He had come to guide Zhang Wei Shan out of kindness, yet had to suffer the latter's doubt, so of course he was not pleased.

Duanmu Chang Feng was even more convinced that these two old men had already lost their minds to be so easily bluffed by this little brat. He gave a humpf and said, "Brat, I don't know what trick you're playing, but if you want to trick me, that's completely impossible!"

"Brother Duanmu, please leave!" Zhang Wei Shan suddenly straightened from his bow and said coldly.

What!

Duanmu Chang Feng almost leaped up from his seat. Has your head been kicked by a mule? You had still been standing on the same side with me just now, and now you're actually pointing the spear at me? How can you be so ungrateful?

"Brother Zhang, what is the meaning of this!" His expression also turned cold.

"The things you've gifted me, I will have someone send it back later. For now, you are not welcomed here!" Zhang Wei Shan said indifferently. He had almost been deceived by Duanmu Chang Feng, and had almost missed the opportunity to come into contact with a Grandmaster Alchemist, so whatever good feelings he had towards Duanmu Chang Feng had disappeared--he could barely hold himself back from biting his head off now!

For any alchemist, there was no higher honor than restoring an ancient pill formula.

"Good! Good!" Duanmu Chang Feng's face had turned ashen. For someone who excelled both in the fields of alchemy and sword arts and whose position was so venerable like him, to actually be turned out by someone, and moreover, for the cause of it all to be a little brat, how could he not be furious?

With a swing of his sleeves, he stepped out of the door. Before he left, his eyes swept over Ling Han, and they were filled with coldness.

Apparently, he had blamed everything on Ling Han.

This was really uninvited trouble. Ling Han shook his head. Duanmu Chang Feng was in Gushing Spring Tier, and was not someone he could fight on equal footing yet, so he could not be careless.

"Old Man Zhu, are you satisfied now?" Zhang Wei Shan said with a smile.

"How tactful of you!" Zhu He Xin glared at Zhang Wei Shan for a moment. No matter what, they had been old friends for so many years, so the words he spoke just now had only been out of anger and irritation. He walked over to Ling Han, bowed deeply, and said, "Young Friend, this old and useless man apologizes to you."

"This old fellow too," Zhang Wei Shan bowed again.

However, his attitude still was not comparable with Zhu He Xin's. Zhu He Xin addressed himself as "this old and useless man" whereas he addressed himself as "this old fellow", so it seemed that he was still putting on some airs.

But Qi Zhan Tai, who had been standing at the side all this while, was dumbfounded. Her Master had actually chased off Duanmu Chang Feng, a man who "excelled both in alchemy and martial arts" because of Ling Han. Furthermore, he had even started a feud with the other. This brat was really too capable.

Chapter 57: Join the Queue

Ling Han walked over to the study table and took up a pen and paper. With very good penmanship, he immediately started writing on the paper.

He wrote very quickly, and soon lifted his pen from the paper. He then handed the paper he had written on to Zhang Wei Shan.

...Because of Zhu He Xin, he had still decided to give Zhang Wei Shan a helping hand. After all, the old man has always been at his beck and call, and has helped him considerably. More importantly, it was he who had provided Ling Han with information about the whereabouts of the Earth Dragon Grass.

Zhang Wei Shan received the paper, and as his eyes swept over it, an expression of surprise and joy appeared on his face.

This was the pill formula for the Reverse Pill!

It definitely was, because not only were the medicinal ingredients the same as what he had on his incomplete formula, even the quantities required were the same. Furthermore, there were even additional three ingredients that could not be read from the incomplete formula.

Zhang Wei Shan was extremely excited, because in the field of alchemy, the Reverse Pill was publicly known to be lost in the passage of time. Even if he had spent a large sum of money to purchase the incomplete formula, this incomplete formula had actually been inferred by many alchemists before. They had all attempted to restore the complete formula, but had not succeeded.

If he managed to produce the complete pill, then his status in the world of alchemists would ascend to a whole new level!

What a joke, previously, he had still been reluctant to show the incomplete formula to Ling Han. Now wasn't reality practically slapping him in the face?

The old man's face turned very red when he thought of this.

Zhu He Xin gave a hump and said, "Old Man Zhang, are you happy now?" He was still a little upset at what had occurred previously.

"Hehe, hehehe!" Zhang Wei Shan laughed, slightly embarrassed. His hands grasped onto the pill formula as if it was some kind of ultimate treasure.

Ling Han walked out of the residence, and said, "I'm going now."

"Many thanks, Young Friend!" Zhang Wei Shan quickly ran over. Once he knew that Ling Han was currently staying at Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, he did not feel any rush to immediately repair the relationship between himself and Ling Han. Moreover, he also needed a little time to adapt.

Ling Han nodded. After he stepped out of the residence, he strolled around.

"Hey hey hey, you are really ungenerous!" Qi Zhan Tai rushed over, an expression of rebuke on her face.

Ling Han smiled, and asked, "In what way am I ungenerous?"

"You obviously are not Grandmaster Zhu's disciple, and caused me to embarrass myself!" She said in reproach. Previously, she had even said that she would become Ling Han's Elder Sister Disciple and would take care of Ling Han in future. She had never thought that this guy was so awesome that even Duanmu Chang Feng would be driven off because of him.

"I never said I was. It was you who thought I was," Ling Han shook his head.

"I don't care, you have to compensate me!" Qi Zhan Tai said shamelessly.

"Then how do you want me to compensate you?" Ling Han asked.

Qi Zhan Tai tilted her head, thought for a while then said, "I

haven't thought of it yet, so you'll owe me first. Oh, right, are you here to participate in the Da Yuan Tournament?"

"That's right," Ling Han nodded.

"Then I'll kindly give you some exclusive behind-the-scenes information!" Qi Zhan Tai said. "There is a considerable number of elites that have arrived to participate in the tournament this time. My Fourth Elder Brother, of course, will be able to get first place! Aside from him, there is also Li Dong Yue from the Stone Wolf Sect. Apparently, he's also in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and he's mastered the Yellow Grade martial arts technique, 'Little Tianyuan Hands'. Even my Fourth Elder Brother has given him a very high appraisal. In the previous Da Yuan Tournament, he got the fifth place.

And there's also the third son of the Jin Clan, Jin Wuji. He's also a freakishly talented guy. He's mastered the 'Jin Yang Palm' of their Jin Clan. He's rumored to also have two flashes of Palm Qi, and in the previous tournament, he was sixth.

And there's... let me think for a moment... ah, an exceptional genius came from Fu Yang Town. His name is Xia Zhong Guang. He's only eighteen this year and he's already in the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier. He's terrifyingly powerful in battle, and my Fourth Elder Brother says he has the ability to enter the top five.

Right, right, there's also an amazing guy from Eternal River Town, what was his name again? Liu Yi? No, was it Liu Yu... or Liu something... he's also eighteen years old, and in the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier. He also has the ability to enter the top five.

The last is the youngest son of the Sect Master of Baili Sect, Baili Teng Yun. Apparently, he's just in the seventh layer of Element Gathering Tier, but my Fourth Elder Brother says that this guy is extraordinary, and his prowess is nowhere beneath Li Dong Yue."

The girl's Fourth Elder Brother was Qi Yong Ye, the one with the nickname King of Eternal Night. He was extremely talented and very powerful, so much that even Liu Yu Tong had exclaimed in admiration. Although Ling Han was confident in himself, he would not be arrogant. It was just that he had too many trump cards in his hands, and he really could not think of anyone who could fight with him on even footing in the whole Element Gathering Tier. Or at least, he could not think of anyone like that in this small Da Yuan City.

He nodded, and said, "Thank you for your inside information."

"Oh, right, Fourth Elder Brother is hosting a feast tomorrow night. Why don't you come as well?" Qi Zhan Tai said, "Only those martial artists who have a chance of getting into the top fifty in the Da Yuan Tournament this time have been invited."

Ling Han could not hold back a smile, and said, "Your elder brother is attracting the support of the people here."

"You're clever!" Qi Zhan Tai did not deny it.

If Qi Yong Ye intended to obtain the position of Da Yuan King in future, he needed to start gathering his support. It would not necessarily be the one who's extremely talented or very powerful that would obtain this royal position. It depended on one's popularity as well.

...If no one in the royal house was willing to support you, how would you be able to ascend to this position?

'Although Fourth Elder Brother is extremely talented in the field of martial arts, Eldest Brother has built up his support through painstaking effort over the duration of more than ten years. Additionally, Eldest Brother's mother is the daughter of the Liu Clan Head. So with the support and favor of the Liu Clan, who would emerge victorious in the end is still uncertain!' The young girl had curled her hands into fists, her face full of excitement, as if she wanted nothing more than for the two

brothers to immediately start fighting, and allow her to spectate it to her heart's content.

Aside from the King's House, there were four other great parties in Da Yuan City that could not be underestimated. They were respectively the Stone Wolf Sect, Baili Sect, Jin Clan and Liu Clan. With the close relationship he had with the Liu Clan, the Eldest Prince really had a big advantage in the battle for the king's position.

Ling Han only thought about it for a short while before pushing it to the back of his mind. What did this battle for the king's position have to do with him?

Qi Zhan Tai kept chattering on and on, bothering Ling Han for a very long while, before she finally let him go. However, when she turned around, she revealed a very crafty smile, and murmured, "Fourth Elder Brother, Fourth Elder Brother, I've introduced a very capable helper to you. You must not mess things up!"

Ling Han was someone whom even Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan addressed as "Young Friend", so he must definitely have an astonishing ability in the field of alchemy. If Qi Yong Ye was able to obtain Ling Han's aid, then there would definitely be innumerable martial artists willing to join him.

For no other reason but for the sake of alchemical pills!

When a martial artist cultivated, he would definitely need the aid of alchemical pills to support his cultivation. And if there was a high grade alchemist overseeing things in the party, then it would naturally be very attractive to all martial artists.

Ling Han naturally saw through the little girl's plot, but he did not think too much of it. He really did want to take a look at this Qi Yong Ye, and see how much of a genius he was.

On the second day, Ling Dong Xing went with Ling Han to register. The participants for the Da Yuan Tournament were only

limited to the local area, so there was a need to provide proof of identification to go through a strict check, because this concerned the enrollment quota for the Hu Yang Academy.

There were thirty six cities in Rain Country, and it was impossible for them all to have the same average level of martial arts. Some were higher and some were lower. As a result, a martial artist who had only obtained the sixtieth position in a tournament in a city with a higher level of martial arts would be able to obtain the fortieth position in a tournament in a city with a lower level of martial arts. Then wouldn't they all race over to a weaker city to participate in the tournament to be able to qualify for a place of enrollment in Hu Yang Academy?

The people of Da Yuan City could only take part in the Da Yuan Tournament, and the people from other cities too could not come over to participate. In this manner, everyone protected their own territory.

There was a large number of people queuing up to register, and the queue was very long.

Ling Han calmly joined the queue. He had already discarded the noble status of a martial artist in Heaven Tier he had possessed in his last life. Everything had begun anew, and he was setting out from the level of an ordinary man. There was nothing wrong with queuing up.

After about two hours, it was almost his turn. There was only one person left in front of him.

But it was at this moment that a young man escorted by four robust men in black forced the others in the queue aside. The five of them came to the registration point and directly cut into the queue in front of Ling Han.

"Hey, join the queue at the back!" Ling Han frowned, and said in displeasure.

"En?" The young man turned to look at Ling Han, and broke into laughter. With an expression filled with disbelief, he said, "You actually want me to queue up? Do you know who I am?"

Chapter 58: Chief Butler

"I don't care who you are, get back to the end of the line!" Ling Han spoke coldly.

"Hahahaha!" The young man laughed raucously, as if he had heard the greatest joke in the world. He shook his head, "You don't know who I am? I am Jin Wuxiang, my elder brother is Jin Wuji!"

Jin Wuji, that was one of the strongest competitors in this round of the Da Yuan Tournament.

No wonder this guy was so arrogant. As a young master of the Jin Clan and with a very powerful elder brother, he did have the right to behave recklessly.

Unfortunately, the one he had encountered now was Ling Han.

"Who cares if you're Jin Wuxiang, or Jin Wuji... whoever you are, get back to the end of the line!" Ling Han gave an impatient wave of his hand.

The smile on Jin Wuxiang's disappeared, replaced by an angered expression. After this brat found out who he was, he still dared to talk back to him? He gave a hump and said, "It is beneath me to lower myself to the level of a minor character like you!"

He turned back around, and was about to begin the registration process.

"Get lost!" Ling Han stretched out a hand, took hold of Jin Wuxiang's shoulder, pulled back and "shua," the guy was flung out of the line.

"Peng!"

He crashed into the wall and slid down with a groan. He immediately grimaced in pain.

"Young Master Wuxiang!" The four men in black hurried forward to help Jin Wuxiang up.

Yet Ling Han did not even afford him a glance, and said, "I would like to register." When he looked at the man responsible for registering the participants, a faintly surprised expression appeared on his face, because this ordinary-looking old man was actually an elite martial artist in Gushing Spring Tier.

"Bastard, you actually dare to make a move against me, and still want to pretend that nothing has happened?" Jin Wuxiang shoved away the four robust men and strode forwards, his eyes spitting fire.

He was the one and only Sixth Young Master of the Jin Clan and the younger brother of Jin Wuji, yet someone actually dared to disrespect him?

"Get lost!" Ling Han said coldly.

"Who do you think you are, to actually be so bold to disrespect me!" Jin Wuxiang said furiously, stretching out a hand to take hold of Ling Han.

"Why are you making a racket here?" The old man who was in charge of registering the participants said, very displeased.

"Old guy, you dare interfere with my business?" Jin Wuxiang immediately gave a hump and glared at the old man. He was used to being arrogant, plus he was currently furious, and thus he did not give his actions a second thought.

Ling Han could not help shaking his head internally. This guy really was seeking his own demise.

"Hehe, every generation of the Jin Clan is weaker than the last. The brats now are becoming more and more thoughtless," the old man sighed. He stretched out his right hand and gave it a flick. "Peng," a herculean strength rushed forth, and Jin Wuxiang directly flew out of the registration room due to the resulting shock wave.

When the old man made a move, everyone finally realized in

shock that this was actually a powerful elite martial artist. All of their faces were filled with astonishment.

Who would have thought that an old man who was in charge of recording and registering the participants would actually be an elite martial artist laying low.

"I know who this senior is, he's the Chief Butler of the Royal House of the Da Yuan King!"

"What, the Chief Butler of the Royal House of the Da Yuan King? How come he's personally doing this kind of work?"

"You ask me, but whom should I ask?"

Someone recognized the identity of this old man, immediately causing a bout of whispering amongst the witnesses. Meanwhile, Jin Wuxiang who had intended to avenge himself, immediately became well-behaved.

Although the Jin Clan was powerful, it was nothing compared to the power of the Royal House of the Da Yuan King! No matter how arrogant and overbearing he was, he was not a fool. He knew what kind of people he could trifle with, and what kind of people he shouldn't even think about trifling with.

He quickly fled with his tail between his legs, followed by his four lackeys. After all, the registration deadline was the day after tomorrow, so there was no need for him to register today no matter what. However, Ling Han had become the target of his grudge--if it wasn't for his interference, there wouldn't have been any dispute about his cutting into the queue at all.

"Many thanks for your fair judgment, Senior," Ling Han said, raising his clasped hands in gratitude. This was an elite in Gushing Spring Tier, and compared to the current him, the old man was much, much more powerful. Additionally, he had already let go of the identity of his last life as a powerful warrior of Heaven Tier and the Alchemy Emperor. There was nothing inappropriate about

addressing the old man 'Senior'.

The old man had a bit of a blurred vision, and he smiled at Ling Han and said, "To be able to break through to the Element Gathering Tier at such a young age, such talent is really promising! My Seventh Young Mistress is about the same age as you, so there might be chances of a match there!"

When everyone heard this, they could not help the weird expressions plastered on their faces. Was this Chief Butler here to seek a Prince Consort for the Royal House?

However, it was impossible for a princess's marriage to be decided by a butler. At most, the Chief Butler could only be responsible for the first round of selections. Whether the candidate passed or not would still be decided by the Da Yuan King.

Even so, everyone sat up and took notice of Ling Han. To be able to gain the recognition of an elite of Gushing Spring Tier, this brat must have had some outstanding quality!

Yet Ling Han pondered and recalled--Seventh Young Mistress, wasn't that Qi Zhan Tai, that young girl? He laughed loudly, and said, "Many thanks for your recognition, Senior, but we should complete the registration process first!"

This brat really was quite bold to actually dare reject the Chief Butler in this manner.

Yet the Chief Butler was all smiles. He was only under the command of the Da Yuan King to see if there were any outstanding geniuses in this round of the Da Yuan Tournament. It was definitely not possible that Ling Han would become the son-in-law of the Royal House just because he had taken a fancy to him.

"Good, where are you from, how old are you, what is your cultivation level and what is your name?" he asked.

"I am Ling Han, I came from Gray Cloud Town. After the New Year, I'll be seventeen, and I am currently in the fourth layer of

Element Gathering Tier," Ling Han replied to each question with a smile.

"Pu!"

The eyeballs of those who were close enough to hear his reply were in danger of popping out of their heads, as if they had seen some kind of ghost.

Many of them had already seen that Ling Han was in Element Gathering Tier. Those who were not able to were clued in to the fact by the words of the Chief Butler. But when they saw how young Ling Han was, they had all thought that he had just broken through. At most, he could only be at the peak period of the first layer of Element Gathering Tier.

Yet Ling Han was shockingly in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier!

A seventeen-year-old in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier... this was absolutely astonishing! Even for the genius that was the Fourth Prince, with the endless cultivation resources supplied by the Royal House, had he managed to reach the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier at seventeen years old?

Perhaps he had, but that was the farthest he could have ventured!

With such a comparison, they could now easily see how freakishly talented Ling Han was. No wonder the Chief Butler wanted to enlist him as a Prince Consort candidate.

Ling Han took out his proof of identification. This was something that every citizen of Rain Country would receive upon their birth. For those who did not have this kind of proof of identification, if they were discovered, they would either become slaves or would be forced to flee from the country.

The Chief Butler only gave it a brief glance, and then gave a plaque to Ling Han. This was the plaque that would allow Ling Han to participate in the Da Yuan Tournament that would be held

two days after tomorrow.

Usually, no one would dare to falsify their identity. This was because once you manage to squeeze into the top fifty, there would be a second check to verify your identity. If it was discovered that anyone had dared to falsify their identity, this was definitely a very heavy crime.

The Chief Butler was very interested in Ling Han, and kept chatting with him about ordinary, daily life. He really seemed as if he intended to marry off his own daughter to Ling Han.

Although everyone else was starting to feel impatient, no one dared to rush him in any way. Even without his esteemed position as the Chief Butler of the Royal House of the Da Yuan King, as an elite martial artist in Gushing Spring tier, he was undeniably a powerful presence within the nearest thousand miles.

It wasn't until Ling Han finally voiced his intention to leave of his own accord that the Chief Butler ended the conversation. Yet he still told Ling Han that if he was free, he was welcome to visit the Royal House of the Da Yuan King, which caused everyone else to turn red-eyed with envy.

This was the same as giving a protective charm to Ling Han. Who would dare make a move against him now?

Chapter 59: Attending the Feast

Because the registration process took too long, Ling Dong Xing and his son had their lunch before returning to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. After resting for a while, it was about close to nighttime.

After Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong made slight preparations, they set off towards the residence of the Fourth Prince to attend the dinner banquet.

The residence of the Fourth Prince was only one street away from the Royal House of the Da Yuan King, so the two residences were really very close. However, out of the many children of the Da Yuan King, only two had gained the privilege of possessing their own individual residences.

The First Prince and the Fourth Prince.

The First Prince, Qi Yong Sheng, had displayed his outstanding qualities from birth. With his extraordinary talent, as well as the fact he was the eldest son of the first wife of the Da Yuan King, he had naturally long firmly established his identity as the heir. But with the sudden emergence of the powerful Fourth Prince, he was currently under a great threat. Now, the position of the heir that he had maintained for so long appeared to be facing imminent danger.

As a result, the competition between the two princes was getting more and more turbulent, and becoming more and more of a dilemma to the various parties as they wondered which prince they should support--if the prince they supported ascended gloriously to the royal position, that would be great, as their own status would then be raised accordingly as well.

But if the prince they supported failed?

When a new king is crowned, he brings to court his own favorites and expels those he disliked. The new king would definitely pay

them back for their previous lack of support.

Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong did not travel by carriage. Instead, they walked to the residence of the Fourth Prince; at the door, there were many guards stationed, helping to welcome the incoming guests.

"Excuse me, please show us your invitation, the two of you." When a guard saw the two of them approach, he walked over and blocked them from advancing further.

"Invitation?" Ling Han startled. He did not have this kind of thing, as Qi Zhan Tai had only issued him a verbal invitation. He said, "I'm Ling Han, and I should be on the namelist for guests."

"Then I apologize. Those without an invitation will not be allowed to enter!" The guard said solemnly.

Has that little girl, Qi Zhan Tai, played a trick on him? Ling Han could not help thinking thus.

"Hahahaha, you dare to come here without an invitation!" A taunting voice said. A young man stepped down from a carriage. He was dressed in luxurious formal attire, making him look very flashy.

He was Jin Wuxiang, and just before noon, he had even had an argument with Ling Han.

"Village boy, this here is the residence of the Fourth Prince, not a place anyone can simply enter freely!" Jin Wuxiang laughed coldly. He then removed a gold-colored invitation from the folds of his clothes, proudly waved it around and said, "Look here clearly, this is the invitation! But a minor character like you will never receive this kind of thing in your life!"

He really was too pleased. At noon, because of the dread he felt towards the Chief Butler, he could only choose to flee with his tail between his legs. But since he has met Ling Han here at this moment, this was an opportunity gifted by heavens for him to

avenge himself!

Haha, he really must properly humiliate this guy... before killing him!

Ling Han could not help shaking his head. This guy was only in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier, so where did his feeling of superiority come from? And he kept attracting aggression for his clan. If he encountered any elite martial artist with a bad temper, that could also possibly lead to difficulties for his clan.

"What are you still standing around here for? Do you think that if you stand here long enough, you'll be pitied and allowed in-" Jin Wuxiang continued to sneer in derision, but once his eyes swept over Liu Yu Tong, his eyes could no longer remove themselves from her figure.

He had only just now realized Liu Yu Tong's presence, and was instantly captivated by this icy beauty. He could only feel the rapidly increasing pace of his heartbeat, and the boiling of the blood in his veins.

"Brat, you-

"Peng!"

Jin Wuxiang had only just opened his mouth when Ling Han gave a heavy blow to his face, and his whole body was instantly flung away.

...This kind of prodigal young master would definitely have nothing nice to say, so Ling Han made a preemptive strike to avoid filth from entering his ears.

"You hit me again?" Jin Wuxiang crawled up from the ground. He was full of grievances. Within this one day, he had been hit by Ling Han twice! He was the Sixth Young Master of the Jin Clan, when had he ever received such treatment?

"If you don't want to be hit a third time, get lost!" Ling Han gave a flick of his hand.

"How dare you, are you really so tired of living!" Jin Wuxiang's eyes were spitting fire, and he said to the guards around them, "You have all seen it, right? This guy actually dared to beat up a guest of the Fourth Prince, are you not going to apprehend him?"

This guy was not stupid, he knew how to take advantage of the situation.

"Master Ling, please cooperate!" One of the guards stepped out, "You must come with us!"

Although all of them knew that the Sixth Young Master of the Jin Clan was a standard prodigal young master and there were a hundred times more people in the city that disliked him than those who liked him, this was the residence of the Fourth Prince. How could others be allowed to act impertinently in this place?

Jin Wuxiang could not help feeling very proud of himself. He was feeling extremely superior because of his own cleverness. See, who was the one who said he'd be nothing without his clan?

"Hey, what's the commotion here all about?" A young girl dressed in courtly attire walked out, hands behind her back and a crafty expression on her face.

It was Qi Zhan Tai.

"Greetings, Seventh Princess!" All of the guards hurriedly saluted.

"Rise!" The young girl raised her hand in a mature, experienced manner. When she looked at Ling Han, she deliberately put on a surprised expression, and said, "Yi, why are you still outside?"

Ling Han understood now. The girl had purposely not issued him an invitation just to see a good show. As a result, she must have waited near the door, and naturally had witnessed the conflict between Ling Han and Jin Wuxiang.

She could have already stepped out early on to stop it, but had only stepped out now. This showed that this girl was the kind of person that desired to see the world in chaos.

When they heard her words, the guards naturally realized that Ling Han was truly one of the guests tonight, so there was no longer any need to bother about little details like why he did not have an invitation. And since the Seventh Princess has already spoken, they could not possibly still intend to apprehend Ling Han.

"Master Ling, apologies for our lacking manners," all the guards said in unison to Ling Han.

Ling Han only gave Qi Zhan Tai a stern gaze, but the girl did not feel scared at all. She stuck out her tongue at him and quickly ran over to Liu Yu Tong and said, "Wa, Big Sister, you're very beautiful!"

Meanwhile, Jin Wuxiang was infuriated half to death. It seemed like he was a hideous person doing mischief, seeking his own humiliation! His eyes focused on Ling Han, and he naturally thought that Ling Han had clung onto Qi Zhan Tai for her power and influence. And when he recalled that Ling Han still had an extraordinarily beautiful maiden by his side, he immediately realized: this guy was a master at picking up girls, and was a professional at living off women.

When he thought in this way, he looked even further down at Ling Han. Many thoughts ran through his mind, like how could he kill Ling Han and avenge himself.

Just when his thoughts took a venomous turn, he saw Ling Han walk over to him. He could not help straightening up into a pompous stance, and said, "You want to make peace with me now? It's too late! I will definitely-

"Pa!"

He received a firm, solid slap, and was completely dumbfounded.

He, the one and only Sixth Young Master of the Jin Clan, had actually been slapped in a public setting... what great shame and humiliation was this?

And all around them, whether it was Qi Zhan Tai, the guards, or the guests who had arrived subsequently, they could not help gasping when they saw this scene.

If a conflict happened amongst the younger generation, it was fine and a normal thing. None of the older generation of the clans would make a move because of this. But even if you beat anyone up, never aim for the face. This was not only an embarrassment to Jin Wuxiang, but also the Jin Clan behind him!

Even the First Prince or the Fourth Prince would not slap Jin Wuxiang impulsively--unless the latter had really done something extremely foolish and idiotic.

Who did Ling Han think he was to actually dare to do such a thing?

Chapter 60: Sitting Up High

Ling Han was a man of simple principles. If you do not bother me, then I will not bother you either. But if you dare to mess with me, then you should be well prepared to suffer my wrath.

"You've messed with me several times now, do you really think I'm an easy target?" He asked coldly.

Jin Wuxiang really felt like he wanted to weep himself to death!

At noontime, it was he who had been flung out, and now, it was also he who had been slapped. All these times, it was he who was on the losing side, okay? And you still dare to say all this, there's no such logic in this world!

...Of course, he would definitely not reflect on the fact that it was he who had provoked Ling Han intentionally at both occasions.

"You can be proud however you want now, but when my elder brother comes later, you'll suffer!" Jin Wuxiang said harshly. He believed that his elder brother would definitely avenge him later.

"Pa! Pa! Pa!"

Ling Han gave him three, four consecutive slaps. There was no sign that he had taken Jin Wuxiang's threat seriously.

"I'll be waiting!" With these last words, Ling Han, Liu Yu Tong and Qi Zhan Tai entered the prince's residence together.

"How come you're even more of a troublemaker than I am?" The Seventh Princess sighed in a sorrowful manner, "You've really caused a disaster now. That was a brat from the Jin Clan. Although he himself is not worthy of respect, his elder brother is Jin Wuji!"

Haven't I told you how powerful Jin Wuji is? And yet you still dare to provoke him!

Ai, I have to quickly inform Master, and ask him to clean up the mess for you. I'm not going to get implicated in this."

Ling Han gave a light rap to her head, and said, "If you hadn't harbored evil intentions, and had not failed to issue me an invitation, how would there have been so many problems?"

"What evil intentions, you must not wrong an innocent person!" Qi Zhan Tai quickly shook her head vigorously, looking like a rattle-drum. She was definitely not going to admit to such a crime, "I had just forgotten. Forgotten, okay?"

Big Sister Liu, don't you agree with me?" She asked Liu Yu Tong, acting like a spoiled child.

Liu Yu Tong maintained her cool demeanor, causing Qi Zhan Tai's eyes to light up. She really felt that this big sister was an individual with quite a personality.

The three of them arrived at the Main Hall. There was close to a hundred tables here, but they weren't the usual round tables. Instead, they were minuscule long tables, which at most would be able to accommodate two people at a time. This setting allowed each guest their own table. If they had brought a companion, then it wouldn't be too much of a tight fit for two people to sit at one table.

These tables were arranged in rows of five, from the doorway of the Main Hall and further in. Obviously, the further in your table was, the higher your status was. Currently, most of the tables were occupied. Aside from an empty table in the first row, the other empty tables were all arranged after the tenth row.

"Just find some place to sit," Qi Zhan Tai said, the corners of her lips lifting up slightly to reveal a crafty smile. She had posed a difficult problem to Ling Han, as she wanted to see where this guy would choose to sit.

It was difficult because there was only one empty table at the front, but this was the first row, and only the strongest of the younger generation had the right to sit there--Ling Han's cultivation level was obviously still far from this level.

But if Ling Han obediently went to sit at the back, this showed that he did not have much ambition and would capitulate easily.

Yet Ling Han did not ponder much about this so-called difficult problem. He only gave a short nod, and without thinking much, headed to the first row.

Although he had let go of the glory of his last life, he still possessed the heart of an elite warrior.

Since there was an empty space in the first row, he would naturally choose to sit there.

Qi Zhan Tai stuck out her tongue, and thought that there would be a good show to watch soon. But she did not overstep her limits. She quickly commanded a servant to go forth to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion to inform Zhang Wei Shan. Otherwise, if things became too much to handle, it would not be easily ended.

"En?"

"Yi?"

"Ah!"

Seeing Ling Han stride towards the front, those who had already occupied their seats all revealed shocked expressions, as they all thought the same thing, 'Who is this guy? Looks like he's going to sit in the front row.'

But out of the five tables in the first row, four were already occupied. The last empty table also actually had an owner. It's just that he hadn't arrived yet.

It belonged to Jin Wuji.

Was this guy an idiot? He even dared to steal Jin Wuji's table?

"Interesting!" The four people who were already seated in the first row all smiled. Some of them wore mocking smiles, while there were some who were genuinely smiling in curiosity, wondering whether this brat was an arrogant fool or someone who

had real power to back it up.

However, very soon their gazes became focused on Liu Yu Tong. This young girl was really too beautiful. Though she seemed a little cold, this was also a kind of temperament! Moreover, she was very strong!

Could it be that she was the master, and the brat in front was only her attendant?

En, en, en, it was more logical to think this way.

"Pfff!"

The four of them almost choked, because they saw Ling Han sit down boldly while Liu Yu Tong sat at his side. With this, who was the master and who was the attendant was easily seen.

It was really inconceivable. Such an extraordinarily beautiful and extremely powerful maiden could only be seated at this brat's side... who exactly was he?

He must be the heir to some Great Clan. Otherwise, he would not have dared to take Jin Wuji's table.

"Hahahaha, I've made you all wait!" Clear laughter was heard all of a sudden as a tall, thin man strode out of the inside door of the Main Hall. He had a majestic gait, presenting a kingly visage.

This was not a ruler in terms of power, but in terms of a kind of confidence in himself.

"Greetings, Fourth Prince!"

Everyone stood from their seats. Now that the host was here, the guests would of course have to stand up and pay due respects.

The Fourth Prince had a table of his own, and his table was the furthestmost in front. Moreover, he sat facing the doorway, while the others sat facing the walls.

"Sit, everyone, please be seated!" The Fourth Prince, Qi Yong Ye's eyes swept over his guests, and when he discovered an unfamiliar

face in the first row, he could not help feeling startled. Who might this be? Why had he taken Jin Wuji's table?

But his gaze quickly spotted Liu Yu Tong, and his heart was stirred.

He also belonged to the Hu Yang Academy, so he naturally recognized Liu Yu Tong to be a noble daughter of the Liu Clan--yet she actually sat at Ling Han's side. 'This, this, this, this...' how could Qi Yong Ye not experience a great shock at this?

But he was still the Fourth Prince, and so was naturally very shrewd. There was no change in the expression on his face, though his eyes had still stayed on Liu Yu Tong's figure for a few moments longer. This did not attract the suspicion of others, because this was a normal occurrence. She was so beautiful that any man would want to stare at her for a moment longer.

"Let me introduce to you..." Qi Yong Ye revealed a smile, confident and calm, displaying fully his royal air. He pointed at the first person seated at the first table towards the left in the first row, "This is Li Dong Yue, Brother Li. He's the personally taught disciple of the Sect Master of Stone Wolf Sect! Brother Li, it has been a long time, you're about to break through to Gushing Spring Tier, right?"

Li Dong Yue laughed heartily, and said, "Fourth Prince, you should not tease me. Even you have not broken through to Gushing Spring Tier, how is it possible that I would be qualified to?"

"Brother Li is really too modest!" Qi Yong Ye pointed at the second person towards the left, "This is Baili Teng Yun, the son of the Sect Master of Baili Sect."

Baili Teng Yun was extremely young. He seemed to be only about seventeen or eighteen years old. He was a little cool, only giving a light "hn" as greeting.

Qi Yong Ye did not take it to heart, and continued his round of introductions, "Next is Xia Zhong Guang, Brother Xia. He came from Fu Yang Town, and he's only eighteen years old. He did not participate in the previous Da Yuan Tournament, but I believe that he will definitely show extraordinary talent in this tournament.

This is Liu Yu, Brother Liu. Like Brother Xia, he's also eighteen years old, and I am very optimistic about his upcoming performance.

And the last—" Qi Yong Ye's gaze stopped on Ling Han's figure, and his words paused. He did not continue to speak, because he did not know how to continue. However, he did not feel the slightest bit awkward. Instead, he only smiled and looked at Ling Han expectantly, as if waiting for Ling Han to introduce himself.

He could also admit that he himself was curious about Ling Han's identity. Who exactly was he to be able to have the noble daughter of the Liu Clan serve by his side?

Chapter 61: The First Prince Has Arrived

"I am Ling Han," Ling Han stood up, offered a faint smile, and then sat back down.

Was that all?

Ling Clan, which Great Clan was that?

Everyone was very curious. There was no Ling Clan in the Eight Great Clans of the imperial city--could it be that the Ling Clan was a Great Clan from some other city? That was possible, because there were thirty-six great cities in Rain Country, and there was a number of Great Clans in each city. That brought the total of Great Clans in the whole country to over a hundred--who could say with certainty that they knew all of them?

However, the most surprised was definitely Qi Yong Ye. He was the only one who knew Liu Yu Tong's real identity. To be able to have a princess of the Liu Clan wait upon him, what kind of colossal existence could this Ling Clan be?

Whatever it was, he still had to maintain a good relationship with Ling Han.

Qi Yong Ye was an expert at manipulating the mood, and very quickly, everyone's attention was again focused on him. There was a round of laughter in the Main Hall, as everyone felt that this prince really had a unique charm, causing many of them to be of a mind to swear loyalty under his banner.

"Announcing the arrival of the First Prince!" It was at this very moment that a loud shout was heard from outside.

The First Prince has arrived?

Everyone was extremely shocked. Who didn't know that the First Prince and the Fourth Prince were currently embroiled in a fierce competition for the King's position? Why had he suddenly come here?

"Fourth Brother!" Very soon, the First Prince appeared at the doorway of the Main Hall. He was a very handsome man in his thirties. He had a tall and sturdy figure with an exceptional bearing. He was all smiles as he took great strides towards Qi Yong Ye, looking nothing like a rival or enemy of the latter.

Qi Yong Ye stood and walked forwards to greet the First Prince. He was also all smiles as he said, "Eldest Brother, what are you doing here?"

When the two of them neared each other, they both tacitly stopped their advance. They both watched each other with smiles, yet neither had any intention of extending their arms to embrace the other in greeting.

"My Fourth Brother is hosting a banquet. I, as the Eldest Brother, must of course come to show my support," the First Prince said, smiling.

Qi Yong Ye could not help but frown slightly at this. The reason he was hosting this banquet was to gain the will of the people to gather support for when he ascends to the position of the king in the future. There was no way that the First Prince did not know this. Then the reason he was here was obvious--he was here to ruin things for him.

"Hehe, then I'll thank you, Eldest Brother!" He said in a very false manner, though his face still wore a dazzling smile.

The First Prince paused, and said, "I've also brought a noble guest with me!"

"Oh, and who might that be?" Qi Yong Ye asked. He knew that the First Prince would not have come just to show his face. The latter would definitely have a more substantial move planned.

"Brother Guo, please!" the First Prince called in the direction of the doorway.

Everyone turned to take a look at the First Prince's 'noble guest'

and saw a young man in gray walk in. He was of medium height and his features were very ordinary, but when they saw the badge that hung on his chest, there was a slight change in all of their expressions.

Yellow Grade medium level alchemist!

Alchemists were an existence that would be welcomed anywhere, as well as an existence that no self-respecting party could lack. If a party possessed the aid and support of an alchemist, then to individual cultivators, or even smaller powers, this party would be very attractive as an ally.

Martial artists were too dependent on alchemical medicines.

"Fourth Brother, let me introduce to you. This here is Guo Ding Quan, Brother Guo, and he's a Yellow Grade medium level alchemist. And Brother Guo's Master is even more impressive. He is the one and only Grandmaster Duanmu, who has been acclaimed as one who excels in both sword skill and alchemy!" The First Prince wore a dazzling smile, and was feeling very cheerful.

On the other hand, Qi Yong Ye felt a bitter taste on his tongue. He knew that the First Prince was here to ruin things, and unfortunately, it seemed like he was going to succeed!

The fact that Guo Ding Quan was a Yellow Grade medium level alchemist was not the main point. The crux of the matter was that his Master, Duanmu Chang Feng, was an actual Black Grade low level alchemist! Although currently, the First Prince was only close with Guo Ding Quan, but a disciple could also in a sense represent the master's partiality.

The First Prince was issuing a signal to everyone: he had a very good relationship with Duanmu Chang Feng and has obtained the latter's support.

This definitely added a very heavy bargaining chip to his pile, while also being a very heavy blow to Qi Yong Ye.

The weight of an alchemist was too much!

"Brother Guo!" Qi Yong Ye said in greeting, still maintaining a wide smile. He could not chase the First Prince and Guo Ding Quan away, or rumors would definitely spread, saying that he was a petty character--as a person who was seated in the upper echelons of society, he definitely had to present himself as a generous man. If he couldn't do even this small thing, then what right did he have to inherit the position of the king?

Guo Ding Quan was very arrogant. Even towards the Fourth Prince's greeting, he only replied with a 'hn'. He was really displaying an all-out arrogance and pride of an alchemist.

This profession was really too scarce, so all alchemists were treated with utmost respect and as a result, completely spoilt.

"Brother Guo, please sit!" Qi Yong Ye was secretly angered, but still displayed a very polite demeanor.

Guo Ding Quan's eyes swept over the scene, before walking forwards in a straight line.

If he was sitting, then he was naturally going to sit in the first row. Otherwise, how could he preserve his pride? Because all the tables here were arranged five in one row, and there was not much of a gap in between tables, so on both sides, there was a very wide aisle; so, Guo Ding Quan could only choose to walk up the left aisle or the right aisle.

The unfortunate thing was that he chose to walk straight up the left aisle, and arrived at Ling Han's table--but whether or not it was because he had spotted Liu Yu Tong, that was something that only he himself knew.

"You can get lost now!" He said coldly.

How overbearing. The first thing he said upon opening his mouth was to tell someone else to get lost. Did he really think he was the emperor?

However, he himself was a Yellow Grade medium level alchemist, while his Master was a Black Grade alchemist, so he really did have the confidence to be so overbearing.

Ling Han smiled. In the eyes of others, this meant that he was apparently going to give in to Guo Ding Quan's overbearing demand, but Liu Yu Tong knew that it was the exact opposite. Ling Han was angry. Not only that, he was very angry. He said, "Why don't you try saying that again?"

"Get lost! Get lost! Get lost!" Guo Ding Quan naturally did not feel scared of this subtle threat. He not only said it again, he even emphasized his demand three times.

A coldness flashed through Ling Han's eyes. In an instant, his hand flashed out, taking hold of Guo Ding Quan's neck. With a harsh tug and a 'peng', Guo Ding Quan's face was instantly pressed firmly onto the table. The shock wave of his face meeting the table caused the wine jar to topple over, and immediately, wine splashed all over his face.

"Wu-" Guo Ding Quan was firmly pressed down onto the table, and he started struggling vigorously, intending to get out of Ling Han's hold. Yet it was all pointless effort.

The Main Hall was dead silent.

This guy was really too great, he even dared to hit an alchemist!

Everyone sucked their breath in shock. He had balls, he was a real man!

The First Prince was initially startled, before suddenly erupting in fury. He never imagined that someone would actually dare to beat up Guo Ding Quan. Initially, his aura had completely overwhelmed Qi Yong Ye, but with this show of force, Guo Ding Quan was not the only one who had lost his face. He was also embarrassed.

He strode quickly towards Ling Han and his right hand flashed

out, intending to grab onto Ling Han's neck, shouting, "I command you to release him!"

"Shua," a strong wind blew past, and Liu Yu Tong had already acted, blocking the First Prince's action.

The First Prince was stunned by her beauty at first, but immediately his gaze regained focus. Everything could be sacrificed for the king's position, and Guo Ding Quan was a trump card that decided whether or not he could defeat the Fourth Prince, thus he could not allow any problems to emerge.

"Step down!" He shouted. He did not counterattack immediately because he did not want to harm such a beautiful maiden if he could avoid it.

Liu Yu Tong only gave a wave of her hand, and said, "Get lost!"

Get lost...! She actually told the First Prince to get lost... she was indeed extremely daring.

When Qi Yong Ye saw this, he could not help smiling. He was the only one who knew that Liu Yu Tong was a noble daughter of the Liu Clan. If the First Prince offended her, that was definitely not anything good for him. But while this would be a bad thing for the First Prince, for himself, this would be a good thing indeed.

Chapter 62: Leaving in Anger

"Get lost!" With a casual wave of his hand, Guo Ding Quan was easily flung away by Ling Han, and with a 'peng', he crashed into the nearest wall.

"Bastard!" Guo Ding Quan got back to his feet and shouted in a towering rage. He was really about to die from his utmost fury. As an alchemist, someone who was respected and revered by everyone, he had actually been pressed onto a table, wine had splattered all over his face, and he had even been flung away to crash into a wall.

Thankfully, dinner had not been served yet. Otherwise, his face would have been even more colorful, decorated by a myriad of dishes.

"You want to try it again?" Ling Han asked coldly. This was not the first alchemist he had thrashed, and definitely wouldn't be the last.

"I want you to die!" Guo Ding Quan roared furiously. "Teng, teng, teng," with heavy steps, he charged over to Ling Han again. As a an alchemist, he had never experienced such great shame. If he did not avenge himself, then he could not live with himself!

Ling Han moved. "Peng," Guo Ding Quan was once again held by his neck, and as expected, slammed onto the table face first. The difference was that Ling Han had used more strength this time, causing the table to be broken in half by the force.

"Ah-!" Veins were protruding all over Guo Ding Quan's face in his anger, and his eyes looked like they were about to spit out fire.

However, he did not charge a second time, because he had finally sensed that the gap between Ling Han and himself was far too wide. Damn it, based on aura, Ling Han could only be about the same level as he himself was. At most, they were both in the fourth

layer of Element Gathering Tier, but why was he so strong?

He turned his head to look at the First Prince. The latter was stuck in a confrontation with Liu Yu Tong, so could not possibly assist him at this time. He raised his voice and said, "Whoever helps me thrash this brat, I will gift him with ten Embracing Origin Pills!"

"What, Embracing Origin Pill!?"

"For anyone below the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, this is a valuable treasure. It can help one in the formation of the origin nucleus and increase the chances of success by about thirty percent!"

"To give out ten pills in one go, what opulence!"

Everyone was discussing this spiritedly, but there were not many who were really interested in taking up Guo Ding Quan's offer, because who amongst those invited was not a genius? For a genius, if they even had to depend on external support just to form their origin nucleus, what right did they have to the name of 'genius'?

When Guo Ding Quan saw this, he could not help grit his teeth and finally announced, "An Earth and Fire Pill!"

"Damn, an Earth and Fire Pill!" This time, everyone could no longer just stay in their seats calmly. Even Qi Yong Ye and the First Prince seemed tempted by this new offer.

The Earth and Fire Pill had similar effects as the Purple Origin Pill. It was also used to help a martial artist break through to the Gushing Spring Tier, but its effects were much weaker than the latter. At most, it could only raise the chance of success by twenty percent. But still, it was a very rare and extremely valuable Spiritual medicine.

Even for a genius like Qi Yong Ye, he also had been stuck at the peak period of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier for over half a year. Normally, if one could manage to break through to

Gushing Spring Tier within three to five years' time, that was already a feat worthy of praise.

Meanwhile, the First Prince had already reached the peak period of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier seven years ago, yet his cultivation level remained unchanged even until now, showing the extreme difficulty of breaking through to the Gushing Spring Tier.

An Earth and Fire Pill could very possibly save quite a few years' time of cultivation for even a genius, so it was extremely valuable. However, although the ingredients required for the concoction of an Earth and Fire Pill were not as costly as the ingredients for a Purple Origin Pill, they were still extremely rare and while there were many willing to buy, none were willing to sell. Otherwise, with the financial resources available to the Royal House of the Da Yuan King, they would have been able to afford a few of them.

As a result, everyone immediately turned to stare feverishly at Ling Han, as if he himself was an Earth and Fire Pill.

"What impudence, where do you people think this place is?" Qi Yong Ye immediately spoke coldly. He was a man that knew what his role was, so he naturally suppressed the covetousness he felt in his heart--Guo Ding Quan was working for the First Prince, so he of course would not bother to assist the former. Moreover, Ling Han had an unknown relationship with Liu Yu Tong, and with this, his position was extremely clear.

He'd help Ling Han!

With this exclamation from the Fourth Prince, everyone immediately regained their composure. This was the residence of the Fourth Prince, and if they dared to come to arms here, then in a sense, it was no different than rebellion.

Guo Ding Quan breathed heavily and glared at Qi Yong Ye fiercely before suddenly turning around and leaving.

There was no way that he could swallow this great offense. He was going to fetch his Master. No one could insult an alchemist in this manner!

"Brother Guo! Brother Guo!" The First Prince hurriedly called as he chased after Guo Ding Quan's heels.

As sudden as the two's arrival was, they left just as suddenly. There was a temporary calm in the Main Hall. Some of the guests felt sorry for missing out on an opportunity to obtain the Earth and Fire Pill, while some other guests were curious about the future development of this matter.

"Come, replace the table!" Qi Yong Ye began to manipulate the atmosphere and once again displayed his personal charm, causing the atmosphere of the banquet to regain its liveliness.

All of them were extremely interested in Ling Han. It was not difficult to restrain Guo Ding Quan. In fact, eighty percent of the people present here would be able to do so easily, but to dare to do so... perhaps only Ling Han possessed such courage.

"Brother Ling, may I know where do you originate from?" Someone finally asked.

"Gray Cloud Town," Ling Han had no intention of concealing it. After all, since he was intending to participate in the Da Yuan Tournament, he could not falsify his identity.

"Gray Cloud Town?" All of them gave a start at this. Wasn't that a small place under the jurisdiction of the Da Yuan City? Then where did Ling Han get his confidence from? He was not the only one who had made a great display of power, for even the girl beside him appeared to be very proud. She had not even taken the First Prince seriously.

Qi Yong Ye was even more surprised. Ling Han came from Gray Cloud Town? Then how had he developed a relationship with Liu Yu Tong?

Even though he himself was of nobility, when compared to Liu Yu Tong, there was still a bit of a gap between them. After all, they could only be considered as one of the branch families of the imperial family, and after so many generations, their relation with the imperial family was not really very close.

Unless he could ascend to the position of the Da Yuan King, even he would not be qualified to marry Liu Yu Tong. Yet Ling Han could have Liu Yu Tong follow closely by his side. A brat from a tiny little Gray Cloud Town, what right did he have to do such a thing?

As the various dishes were served, everyone too felt slightly famished and so began eating. Martial artists expended a lot of energy, and so would become hungry more easily than normal people.

"Hahahaha, apologies, apologies. Fourth Prince, I've arrived late," a long bout of laughter was heard and a tall, young man walked in. He appeared to be about twenty years old, and had an astonishing aura to him.

The third son of the Jin Clan, Jin Wuji.

Jin Wuxiang followed right behind, imitating the former's steps slavishly. He seemed a bit like a mouse that had seen a cat, and there was absolutely no sign of his prior arrogance.

"Brother Jin, why are you so late?" Qi Yong Ye asked, smiling as he stood.

"I had some trifling matters to deal with!" Jin Wuji said, as he continued to walk forwards.

"Elder Brother, that's him! That's him!" When they arrived at the first row, Jin Wuxiang immediately called out, as he pointed at Ling Han.

Jin Wuji's eyes swept over the first row, and could not hold back an expression of shock from appearing on his face, as he said, "Yi,

"Younger Sister Disciple Liu, what are you doing here?" He was also a disciple of Hu Yang Academy, so he naturally recognized the princess, Liu Yu Tong.

Liu Yu Tong only nodded back calmly and did not make any further response.

Jin Wuji knew her personality, so he did not take her cool response to heart. His gaze turned towards Ling Han, and coldness flashed through his eyes immediately. Initially, he had only been a little late, but when he encountered his younger brother at the entrance and found out what the latter had experienced, he immediately ordered someone to investigate Ling Han.

This was not difficult. Since he had already registered, there would definitely be a profile of him in the records.

A mere young master from a tiny clan of Gray Cloud Town, and he actually dared to oppose the Jin Clan?

He definitely did not think that Liu Yu Tong would actually deign to like Ling Han. Even if she did, the Liu Clan would definitely not agree to such a match. This would practically be a great dishonor to the clan! As a result, he did not fear that Liu Yu Tong would defend Ling Han. Moreover, his power was above Liu Yu Tong.

"Brat, get lost from my seat!" He said coldly.

Chapter 63: Damn, Hit the Wrong Person

Ling Han could not withhold a smile from turning up at the corners of his lips, and said, "Are you sure you want this seat?"

"Heng, this was originally my seat!" Jin Wuji said coldly.

"Very well, since you want it, then I'll just let you have it," Ling Han stood up very candidly.

"Pu!"

Quite a few people exclaimed in surprise. Because, there really was too big a difference between what Ling Han was doing now and what he had done just now.

Previously, Ling Han had even dared to thrash the disciple of someone who excelled in sword arts and alchemy openly in front of the First Prince. Yet, now he was actually scared off!

It was inconceivable, it was really inconceivable!

They were not the only ones who thought it was inconceivable. Liu Yu Tong was in complete bewilderment. Ling Han had left a very distinct impression on her. Though he may appear to be utterly calm, he was prouder than anyone else.

How was it possible that he would give in to Jin Wuji's demand?

If they really had to battle, she was adequate enough to face Jin Wuji. And even if the Jin Clan stepped out and interfered, didn't he still have the colossal existence of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion behind him? In the whole of Rain Country, what party would dare to offend Heaven's Medicine Pavilion?

None, there were definitely none. Because, this huge power did not only exist in Rain Country, but also possessed branches in the nine countries in the Desolate North, so whether it was in terms of power or wealth, it had a terrifying amount of both.

Just think, when martial artists cultivate, they would definitely

need the support of alchemical pills, and Heaven's Medicine Pavilion was a place where alchemical pills could be sold, so how could there be a lack of elite martial artists willing to act on their behalf?

From the reverence and respect Zhu He Xin felt towards Ling Han, he had practically recognized the latter as his teacher. If the Jin Clan dared to harm Ling Han, he would definitely unleash the power of the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion Branch of Rain Country and obliterate the Jin Clan!

Since the facts were as so, then why would he need to fear?

Ling Han stretched out an arm and drew Liu Yu Tong to himself. An enchanting blush instantly appeared on the young girl's beautiful face, and there was absolutely no hint of the icy beauty from before.

'Damn!'

When they saw this dazzling, extraordinarily beautiful maiden, everyone was filled with such irrepressible jealousy that their eyes turned red, wanting nothing more than to chop off the arm Ling Han was holding Liu Yu Tong with.

Liu Yu Tong's mind had completely blanked. She only felt as if she was walking on clouds, and when she followed Ling Han to sit in one of the tables at the row further behind, even though Ling Han had long withdrawn his arm, she still had not regained her senses. Her heart was still rapidly beating.

"Just wait and we'll see a good show," Ling Han said softly by her ear.

Liu Yu Tong froze at this, and said, "What good show?"

Ling Han pouted a bit, and said, "Don't forget that that Guo-something from just now had gone to get reinforcements."

"You're planning to trick Jin Wuji?" Liu Yu Tong finally understood.

Ling Han smiled and said, "I've already asked him if he really wanted that seat, and he himself agreed to it, so what does that have to do with me?"

Liu Yu Tong could not help pursing her lips in a delicate smile, but immediately frowned, and said, "Duanmu Chang Feng couldn't be that hot-headed, right?"

"I bet he has already restrained a whole stomach's worth of anger from yesterday, and when that Guo-whatever returned, he'd definitely exaggerate the story, thus the old man's wrath would definitely be extraordinarily large. Moreover, when I was thrashing that Guo-whatever, I immediately acted without saying a single word," Ling Han laughed and said, "So, there is a high possibility that the old guy would do something like that."

"When that Duanmu Chang Feng realizes that he has punished the wrong person, he would definitely focus on you," Liu Yu Tong's delicate brow wrinkled in a frown.

"I think that, by that time, Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan will have already arrived. However, even if they have not, I have my own ways of dealing with that old man," Ling Han revealed a confident smile, for Zhu He Xin had told about Duanmu Chang Feng to him. The old man was praised as one who excelled in sword arts and alchemy, and the sword technique that he practiced was "Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts", a Black Grade low level martial arts technique.

However, the old man only managed to learn seven moves, while the complete Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts had a total of nine moves!

The book of sword arts techniques that the old guy managed to get his hands on should be a partially ruined relic, which was why he had not managed to learn the last two moves.

Coincidentally, Ling Han possessed the complete Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts, so no matter from which angle one looked, he had the

upper hand in the upcoming confrontation.

Liu Yu Tong has definitely been badly influenced by Ling Han, and she could not withhold an expectant look from appearing on her face.

Because of Ling Han's "lack of moral backbone", all of the guests felt shame for sharing his company, thus no one else spoke to him. Meanwhile, Jin Wuxiang turned his head repeatedly, displaying a challenging expression to Ling Han. From his expression, he had clearly held disdain for Ling Han as well.

He had originally thought that Ling Han would be stubborn, and in that way, his Elder Brother would definitely have an excuse to heavily injure Ling Han. He had never thought that the guy was the type to bully the weak while fearing the strong.

'But, do you think that you'll be able to escape just like this?'

Jin Wuxiang humphed coldly in his heart. Once the banquet ended and they had left the residence of the Fourth Prince, Jin Wuji would definitely act and ruthlessly teach Ling Han a lesson.

...They still had to give face to the Fourth Prince.

Ling Han's capitulation was something that even Qi Yong Ye had not thought would happen, so he too grew disdainful of Ling Han. As a result, he did not bother to waste any more time on Ling Han, and went on with his original plans, starting to persuade the other guests in hope that everyone invited would agree to support him.

"Master, that's him!"

Not long after, a voice filled with fury was heard. Guo Ding Quan had once again appeared at the entry to the Main Hall, and he was pointing inside.

Everyone turned around at this, but they only felt their eyes blurring as a figure flew past with a terrifying speed. It was an old man dressed in a gray robe, with a sword on his back. His figure flashed by and soon appeared next to Jin Wuji. He then stretched

out a hand, took hold of Jin Wuji's neck and fiercely pressed it down.

"Peng!"

The power behind this move was extremely large, and it had broken the table into two halves. By now, the dishes and wine had all been served, so instantly, the wine and gravy from the dishes had all splattered onto Jin Wuji's face.

This was an uninvited calamity, definitely an uninvited calamity.

How could Jin Wuji have imagined that someone would actually dare attack him? Moreover, his attacker was so overwhelmingly powerful that he didn't even have the ability to defend himself, and in such a confusion, suffered this kind of calamity.

"Hahahaha, you were so arrogant, why don't you try being arrogant again?" Guo Ding Quan had raced over, and aimed a few kicks on Jin Wuji's behind. His whole face was twisted in fury, as if he wanted nothing more than to commit murder.

Jin Wuxiang was initially startled, before shouting, "Why are you beating him up?" He felt very wronged.

Because, all this while, the Jin brothers were always the ones who bullied others, yet today, his elder brother had actually been thrashed by two people they had never even met before. He didn't even manage to react in time due to shock.

Guo Ding Quan took one glance at him, and only felt that Jin Wuxiang was a completely unfamiliar face. It was not the icy beauty from before. Still, he did not take this disparity to heart, and only continued to kick Jin Wuji furiously.

The people involved in the confrontation each had their own side. One side had misunderstood while the other side was stuck in a complete daze, but others immediately came to a realization--Guo Ding Quan had brought his Master who excelled in both sword arts and alchemy, Duanmu Chang Feng, yet had hit the wrong target!

Poor Jin Wuji, he was painfully thrashed for no reason. At this moment, he had to be feeling extremely gloomy.

No wonder Ling Han had yielded the seat to Jin Wuji just now. Apparently, he had already planned to lay a trap for him.

Damn, this guy was really too devious!

When they saw that Jin Wuji was still being thrashed while Jin Wuxiang seemed to be at a complete loss, quite a few people could not hold themselves back from laughing out loud. Moreover, the laughter was getting louder and louder, and finally spread to all the others as everyone held their stomachs and laughed raucously.

Guo Ding Quan too finally realized that something was wrong. He turned Jin Wuji to face him, and when he saw the unfamiliar face that was completely splattered with wine and gravy, he could not help giving a start and said, "Who are you?"

"Pu!"

Jin Wuji instantly spat out a mouthful of blood in anger. You don't even f**king know who I am, then why did you beat me up? And you had thrashed me so ferociously, even?! Who had he actually offended?

"No matter who you people are, I will definitely have you pay the price!" He roared in fury.

Chapter 64: Effortlessly Controlling the Situation

"This is not the person who had thrashed you?" Duanmu Chang Feng was also startled, as well as slightly displeased. Since this wasn't the guy, then why the heck did you point at this guy the moment you came in?

"No!" Guo Ding Quan was also very depressed. Since you're not Ling Han, then what the heck were you doing sitting here? He looked at Jin Wuji and asked, "Where is the person who had been sitting here before?"

Jin Wuji was not a fool, so he immediately realized. He had fallen into Ling Han's trap!

This brat had offended these two people, and coincidentally, he had demanded for the brat to relinquish his seat to him. As a result, the brat took advantage of the situation to lay a trap for him, causing him to suffer horribly!

That damned little beast!

"Ling Han!" He roared loudly, "Get out here, I'm going to kill you!"

Ling Han?

When Duanmu Chang Feng heard this name, killing intent instantly appeared in his heart. This was the name of the junior who had caused him to sustain extraordinary loss of face! An old fox like him of course immediately realized that both he and Jin Wuji had been played by Ling Han.

"Shua," everyone's eyes turned to look at Ling Han.

Ling Han was sitting upright, and even with so many people focused on him, he did not feel the slightest bit nervous. He took a sip of wine, and could not help recollecting that in his last life, all

the wines he had drunk were the best quality wine. It was definitely not something this so-called "excellent wine" could be compared to.

For the moment, Jin Wuji had no intention of getting his revenge on Guo Ding Quan. Moreover, the latter had Duanmu Chang Feng with him, and this was a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier whose prowess was stronger than his own by who knows how many times.

He looked at Ling Han, his hands tightly gripped into fists. Gravy and blood had spilled from his wounds due to being smashed into the table covered his face. His appearance was ferocious and twisted; it could practically scare kids to tears.

"Ah, you've played us!" Jin Wuxiang called out, pointing at Ling Han. He had finally realized the truth.

"Hahahaha!" Quite a few people could not hold themselves back from laughing aloud. So the saying held true--though a dragon has nine sons, each of them are different. This Jin Wuxiang was a complete idiot. It didn't even seem that he and Jin Wuji could have come from the same father and mother.

"You are indeed extremely daring!" Duanmu Chang Feng said darkly. He actually dared to manipulate even himself, looks like this little junior was really tired of living.

Seeing Duanmu Chang Feng speak, Jin Wuji immediately fell silent. Obviously, the former also had some kind of conflict with Ling Han, and this man was in Gushing Spring Tier, and his status was far higher than his own as well. Even if he intended to get his own revenge... he would have to wait for his turn.

Duanmu Chang Feng took great strides towards Ling Han, his eyes cold. He had already decided: even if Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan both came, he would still not spare this insolent junior.

Guo Ding Quan followed closely, a cold smile upon his lips. This

brat dared to trick even his master. He was really dead this time.

Duanmu Chang Feng did not walk very fast, but every step he took caused the whole Main Hall to shake slightly, showing the towering rage that this man, one who excelled in both sword arts and alchemy, was currently feeling. Even Qi Yong Ye, as the Fourth Prince, dared not speak up in defense of Ling Han at this moment.

What was Ling Han going to do now?

His move just now was indeed very beautiful, managing to trap and trick two of his enemies simultaneously. However, no matter if it was Duanmu Chang Feng or the Jin Clan, neither was a party that could be offended without harsh consequences.

Everyone felt extremely curious about his next move. Ling Han did not look at all like that kind of fool.

Liu Yu Tong immediately stood, and assumed a defensive stance in front of Ling Han.

However, she was immediately pushed lightly aside by Ling Han. Ling Han only said calmly, "The Four Winds rise, Clouds in the heavens thrown into disorder, the Tiger and Crane both appear, creating Invincibility!"

"Zhi!"

Duanmu Chang Feng's advancing steps paused, and he looked as if he had been struck by a lightning bolt, wearing an expression like he had just seen a ghost. But after a short moment, he immediately looked very excited, so much in fact that even his body began shaking.

This was the verbal chant for the eighth move of the Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts!

The Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts was a Black Grade medium level martial arts technique. He had learned it from a secret scroll he had obtained from an ancient site. Unfortunately, due to the long

passage of time, the parts showing the last two moves had completely deteriorated. There was only a verbal chant as well as an illustration for the eighth move, but there wasn't even a name for the ninth move left behind.

The reason why he could afford to not take Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan seriously was because he possessed the Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts!

The three of them were all in the third layer of Gushing Spring Tier, but because of the Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts, even if Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan joined forces, they would still be no match for him. But it was precisely because this sword arts technique was so powerful that he desired to obtain the last two moves even in his dreams.

Thus, when Ling Han recited the verbal chant from Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts, how could he not be excited?

"You, you know it?" Duanmu Chang Feng said, his voice stuttering.

"Naturally!" Ling Han nodded.

"Will you teach me?" The old guy's face was filled with expectation.

Ling Han smiled, and said, "That will depend on your performance!"

Duanmu Chang Feng did not even spend any time to consider, and said, "Whatever request you have, just say it! Whether it is alchemical pills, or resources for cultivation, I can give them to you!"

"Si!"

Around them, everyone was at an absolute loss. Just now, Duanmu Chang Feng seemed like he would stop at nothing in his desire to kill Ling Han, so how come his attitude changed so drastically? Was this some kind of magic trick?

"Master-" Guo Ding Quan had become anxious. What kind of demonic magic had this brat used?

Ling Han pointed at Jin Wuji and his brother, and turned to point at Guo Ding Quan as well, and said, "These three guys, they are unpleasant to my eyes!"

"Very well!" A very experienced man like Duanmu Chang Feng of course instantly understood Ling Han's meaning. He did not say another word before he lifted up Guo Ding Quan in one move and in a flash arrived in front of the Jin brothers. His left hand gave a shove, and a very powerful, irresistible force caused the two Jin brothers to fall down onto the floor.

"Peng peng peng peng," Duanmu Chang Feng kicked and punched, ravaging the three as much as he liked.

Everyone else was completely dumbfounded. Ling Han had just said a few words that sounded like some kind of verbal chant, and Duanmu Chang Feng actually became Ling Han's underling, obeying his commands?

Admiration for Ling Han had risen in all of them. Whether it was Guo Ding Quan, the Jin brothers, or even Duanmu Chang Feng, they had all been played, being in the palm of his hand.

The Jin brothers were completely depressed, the depression sinking into their very bones.

What great enmity or conflict did they have with Duanmu Chang Feng? Previously, they had been thrashed by this old man for no reason, but that could be explained by it all being a misunderstanding due to Ling Han tricking them both. But what about this time?

But since a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier had made his move, what else could they do other than obediently suffer the thrashing without complaints?

Qi Yong Ye's face was twitching all over. Since the moment he

saw that Ling Han had Liu Yu Tong accompany him, he already knew that this guy was definitely not ordinary, but to be awesome to such an extent caused even him to experience a great shock.

Duanmu Chang Feng was not just a warrior of Gushing Spring Tier, he was also a Black Grade low level alchemist, being slightly well-known in Rain Country. Even if a powerful warrior of Spiritual Ocean Tier met him, the former would be extremely courteous and polite.

But now, to put it in a coarse manner, what difference did he have with being Ling Han's underling, simply doing as the latter commanded? What happened to the dignity of an alchemist, or the moral integrity of a warrior of Gushing Spring Tier?

However, if he maintained a good relationship with Ling Han, did that mean he would be able to take Duanmu Chang Feng under his own banner?

The First Prince was so excited just from being able to befriend Guo Ding Quan... if he managed to attract Duanmu Chang Feng to his side... then his position would be incomparably steady, and no one would be able to stop him from inheriting the king's position!

And thus, when Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan arrived at a later time, they saw such a scene--Duanmu Chang Feng was thrashing his own disciple and the Jin brothers as if he had gone mad, while the person they were supposedly here to rescue, Ling Han, was leisurely sitting, drinking wine and eating.

What kind of game were they playing here?

Chapter 65: Summoned by the Da Yuan King

Guo Ding Quan and the Jin brothers felt gloomy to the extreme.

For Guo Ding Quan, Master beating up his disciple was the same as a father beating his son--a law of nature, so how could he even think of avenging himself? If he did, that would fall into the crime of ingratitude and cheating his own Master, and wherever he fled to, he'd be pointed out by every man!

Meanwhile, the Jin brothers knew that the old man that had thrashed them was the one who excelled in sword arts and alchemy, a person who possessed extremely high status. Even when the Da Yuan King met him, he'd still treat the latter with utmost courtesy and politeness, so even if the older generations of the Jin Clan found out about this matter, they would still definitely not seek vengeance for them.

Which means that they had suffered this thrashing for absolutely no reason.

Ling Han!

The three of them gritted their teeth in fury. The chief culprit behind all this was Ling Han, and he had become the object of their utmost hatred.

"Young Friend Ling, are you all right?" Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan had raced over, anxious expressions on their faces.

"I'm fine!" Ling Han shook his head with a smile.

'Of course he's fine,' everyone else thought. He played a trick on both the Jin brothers and Duanmu Chang Feng, and now even Duanmu Chang Feng was listening to his every command, how could he possibly not be fine?

However, when they saw the two alchemists arrive and present an overwhelmingly polite demeanor towards Ling Han, they could not control their lips from twitching, and everyone was becoming

even more curious about Ling Han's actual identity.

Who was this guy?

The heartbeat of the Fourth Prince had quickened as he decided to spare no effort to pull Ling Han into his own support camp. If he managed to obtain the support of three alchemists through Ling Han, then what else did he have to fear from a mere Liu Clan? The position of the Da Yuan King would definitely fall to him!

Ling Han did not intend to stay any longer in this place, and so turned around to depart. Duanmu Chang Feng, uncaring of his own face, followed behind him to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. He still had to ask Ling Han for the verbal chants and illustrations for the last two moves of the Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts.

Regarding this matter, Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan were both very shocked. They had never thought that Ling Han not only had a terrifying level of achievements in terms of alchemy, but possessed extraordinary understanding even in the field of martial arts, so much that he could even guide Duanmu Chang Feng, who has been praised as "one who excelled in both sword arts and alchemy".

Ling Han did not go back on his word. Upon their return, he taught the missing eighth move of Sweeping Cloud Sword Arts to Duanmu Chang Feng.

As for the ninth move?

He would of course not immediately teach him that last move to avoid Duanmu Chang Feng abandoning his benefactor after reaching his goal. At the very least, he would wait until he himself had broken through to the Gushing Spring Tier. By that time, there would be no harm to teach him the ninth move. Anyways, this was just a Black Grade medium level martial arts technique, and for Ling Han, it was completely unimportant.

Duanmu Chang Feng apparently understood this as well, as he

excused himself shortly after obtaining the verbal chant and illustration for the eighth move. Whether he managed to get the ninth move or not would depend on his future performance.

When he returned to his room, Ling Han very quickly fell asleep, and Ling Dong Xing had completely no idea how big a commotion his son had created that night. None of those who had the qualifications to be invited to the Fourth Prince's banquet were mouthy idiots, so the news about Ling Han had only spread around in a very small circle.

Early morning the next day, a servant from the Royal House of the Da Yuan King arrived at Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, saying that the Da Yuan King had invited Ling Han over for a meeting.

The Da Yuan King wanted to see him?

Ling Han did not have Liu Yu Tong follow him; he alone went with that servant to the Royal House of the Da Yuan King. Very soon, when they arrived at the study, he saw this local overlord.

The Da Yuan King was already sixty years old, but because he had a high cultivation level, he did not look old at all. On the other hand, his figure was tall and sturdy, and his whole body exuded a very powerful aura, displaying the atmosphere of a ruler.

The sixth layer of Spiritual Ocean Tier.

Ling Han only took one glance, and there was no way for this man to conceal his cultivation level in front of his eyes. On the path of martial arts, every fourth and seventh layer was a different threshold. This Da Yuan King should have been stuck on this layer for a very long time.

"Greetings, Da Yuan King!" Ling Han raised his clasped hands as a salutation.

"Rise!" The Da Yuan King raised his hand, and said with a smile, "Youngsters nowadays are really impressive. Not only managing to reach the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier at such a young

age, you even have three Black Grade alchemists revolving around you. Even I have not had such an honor."

The Da Yuan King had obviously already found out about the previous night's event.

Ling Han laughed mischievously and said, "I only have some slight academic attainments in alchemy, which allowed me to share a common language with Grandmaster Zhu and the others." [ED/N: academic as in theory.]

The Da Yuan King naturally would not believe Ling Han's words, yet he did not attempt to point it out bluntly. He only kept his extreme curiosity to himself--curiosity how such a genius had appeared within the area under his jurisdiction... and a genius that had three alchemists willingly revolving around him at that.

"Then what about that girl of the Liu Clan?" He asked with a smile. The issue about Liu Yu Tong couldn't be hidden from him either.

"Hehe, if one is born handsome, he'd be popular everywhere," Ling Han said exaggeratedly.

"Haha, you!" the Da Yuan King pointed a bit at Ling Han, as if reprimanding him for being too slick in his speech. He changed the topic swiftly and asked, "Whom do you think out of my two sons is more suitable to inherit my position?"

Was it appropriate to ask him this question?

Ling Han smiled, and said, "The two Princes each have their individual merits. Who exactly is more suitable, I believe that Da Yuan King, Your Majesty, you have your own thoughts. Then what need is there for me to speak more on the subject?"

The Da Yuan King once again broke out into loud laughter as he thought silently, 'this slippery kid, his argument is watertight'. He once again changed the topic, and said, "I have one more daughter who has yet to marry. Are you willing to become my son-in-law?"

Damn, were all the people from the Royal House of the Da Yuan King so direct? Previously, when he went to register himself for the tournament, the Chief Butler had also attempted some matchmaking on the spot. And now, this man, the actual father of the girl, was the same, as if he was in a hurry to marry off his daughter.

Ling Han hurriedly waved his hands, and said, "My heart is fully focused on martial arts, and within the next few years, I will not consider marriage."

The Da Yuan King could not help feeling that it was quite a pity. Even Zhu He Xin, Zhang Wei Shan and Duanmu Chang Feng treated Ling Han with utmost respect, so obviously this young man had terrifying ability in the field of alchemy. If the latter could become his son-in-law, then he would become an unimaginable aid to their family branch.

But since Ling Han had already tactfully declined the offer, as a King, he could not be so shameless as to insist. Moreover, his daughter was beautiful, so it was not like there was no one willing to marry her.

"If you encounter any troubles in future, you may come and ask me for help!" The Da Yuan King gave Ling Han a very heavy promise. Even if he could not manage to become Ling Han's father-in-law, he was still determined to maintain an affable relationship with this young man.

"Many thanks for your generosity!" Ling Han accepted this favor with grace. After all, the current him was still too weak, so he still needed this kind of support and assistance.

When he returned to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, he discovered that the Fourth Prince had come to pay him a visit, and had been waiting for a very long time for his return.

The Fourth Prince conversed with him for a very long time, but did not really say anything substantial. He was simply trying to

maintain a good relationship with Ling Han. Obviously, the Fourth Prince knew that he was too weak to actually persuade Ling Han to join his ranks. As a result, it was only a relationship between two contemporaries, and the Fourth Prince didn't even hint that he intended to have Ling Han join him as an underling.

On Ling Han's side, he did not mind having another friend, and so, the two of them naturally had a very delightful conversation.

After resting one more day, the actual day of the Da Yuan Tournament had finally arrived.

The first thing on the agenda was to draw lots.

After confirming the fifty seeded participants, the other participants would be divided into groups based on the lots they drew. They would be separated into fifty small groups, which would respectively ascend to their own tournament stage. Then the battle would begin, and the last person standing on the tournament stage would be one of the top fifty participants of this Da Yuan Tournament, successfully obtaining a place of enrollment into Hu Yang Academy.

Ling Han had also obtained the place of a seeded participant, and this guaranteed that in the first round of battle, he would not encounter any opponents that were too powerful--of course, no matter how strong his opponent was, he would still hold no fear.

"Big Brother Ling!" Li Hao and the others were standing nearby, waving at him.

Chapter 66: Tournament Begins

"Aiya, I'm done for this time. I drew the seventh group, and I heard that the seeded elite in that group is Sima Wen Dong. He's the strongest member in his generation of the Sima Clan of Da Yuan City, and he's already reached the seventh layer of Element Gathering Tier," Liu Dong sighed, shaking his head.

"I'm worse off. I'm in the first group, and the seeded elite of my group is the Fourth Prince. I really don't have a sliver of hope left now!" Zhu Xue Yi sighed similarly, but she quickly became excited, and said, "But it's possible that Li Hao may advance and obtain a spot to enroll in the academy!"

Ling Han glanced over at Li Hao. Within this time of over a month, he had managed to reach the late period of the third layer of Element Gathering Tier. This, of course, was due to the effects of the three Transcending Origin Pills he had taken.

With this kind of cultivation level, along with his Saber Qi, the possibility of Li Hao managing to advance was very high. After all, he had drawn the fortieth something group, where the seeded elite was only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier--although a person in the fourth layer still possessed a great advantage against someone in the third layer, Li Hao had Saber Qi, which would be more than sufficient to compensate for the gap between himself and his opponent.

Additionally, the seeded elite had to face the imminent danger of being ganged up on by everyone else. As long as Li Hao was low-key enough, concealing his power for a sudden eruption at the very end, then it was very possible that he would be the one having the last laugh.

Liu Dong and the others were very envious. They had also asked for Li Hao's guidance on Saber Qi, but no matter how much effort they exerted, they still could not manage to form Qi.

"Ai, when we were in Guo Rock Town, we thought we were the strongest. But it was only when we came here that we realized that the real gathering spot for geniuses was this Da Yuan City. Parties like the Jin Clan and the Liu Clan can so easily produce ten plus seeded elites," Chen Peng Ju shook his head, his face filled with disappointment.

He and Zhou Chang managed to break through to the Element Gathering Tier with the help of the Green Spiritual Fruit. However, there were so many powerful warriors gathered for the Da Yuan Tournament this time! If one did not at the very least possess the prowess of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, then unless he was like Li Hao who had managed to form Saber Qi, there was absolutely no chance of obtaining a place in the top fifty.

"Big Brother Ling, what about you? Which group did you draw?" The five of them looked at Ling Han in askance.

They were all well aware that Ling Han was very powerful, so as long as he drew a good lot, then the chances of him being able to advance into the top fifty were extremely high.

Ling Han smiled, and said, "I'm the seeded participant of the fortieth group."

"Pu!"

Liu Dong and the others all choked, and they looked at Ling Han as if they were looking at some kind of monster.

A few months ago, this guy had still been the same as them, also in the Body Refining Tier; yet now, he actually managed to become a seeded elite? How could they not be shocked by such a thing? They were also filled with disbelief.

"You, you're actually in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier already?" Li Hao punched a fist on Ling Han's chest jokingly. But once he recalled that Ling Han had given him two extra Transcending Origin Pills, and had also declared truthfully that he

had more in his possession, then it was nothing strange for him to be able to advance to the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier in that span of time.

"If he's a seeded participant, then he'd be able to avoid encountering the other elites. Plus, Big Brother Ling still has Sword Qi, so he'd definitely be able to win!" Liu Dong said, his face filled with envy.

Zhu Xue Yi and the others nodded in agreement. If you managed to enter the top fifty, you'd be able to obtain a ticket into Hu Yang Academy, which was the dream of every martial artist in Rain Country.

...If they knew what had happened the night before, they'd probably be shocked to the point that their eyes would practically pop out. He actually managed to have three Black Grade alchemists follow behind him.

"Hahahaha, you want to win? That's impossible!" An arrogant voice exclaimed, and a young man appeared in front of them.

He was Feng Luo. Previously, after they had managed to kill the Red Scaled Dragon Snake, he had attempted to steal the fruits of their labor. Yet, in the end, due to the final counterattack, all his underlings were killed, while he himself received a harsh thrashing at Ling Han's hands, but fortunately managed to survive.

They had never thought that he would reappear so quickly with his lofty, arrogant attitude in front of them. There was absolutely no improvement to his cultivation, and he was still in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier.

For the majority of martial artists, that one step into the Element Gathering Tier was an extremely hard one to take. It was not strange at all to spend more than ten years to take that single step--which was also why Hang Zhan had been so overbearing and forceful, using any means possible to steal the Green Spiritual

Fruit.

"Big Brother Ling is a seeded elite and he's very powerful. Why wouldn't he win?" Zhu Xue Yi asked Feng Luo.

"Because I am also in the fortieth group!" Feng Luo declared confidently.

"Hahahaha!" Liu Dong and the others broke out into laughter. One side was in the Element Gathering Tier, while the other was still in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier. The gap between their respective prowess could really be compared to the gap between heaven and earth. No matter how it was, Feng Luo really did not have a sliver of a chance at winning.

"Laugh, go on and laugh. You'll be crying in the afternoon!" Feng Luo spoke coldly.

Liu Dong and the others were all curious. What kind of trump card was hidden up his sleeve that allowed him to have such overwhelming confidence?

"Hahaha, hahahaha!" Feng Luo laughed loudly, walking away with his head held high.

"Don't worry about him, he's just a nasty character!" Ling Han said, smiling.

The other five nodded in agreement.

The drawing of lots was completed before noon, and they would be having the tournament stage battles in the afternoon to select the fifty strongest martial artists. After that, there would be another round of battles the next day to decide the ten strongest as well as the first place.

After lunch, everyone soon arrived at the Wrestling Ring in the city. There would usually be various martial arts activities held here. During the New Year, when a ceremony to offer sacrifices to the gods took place, there were also martial artist versus demonic beast battles held in this location. As a result, the yellow sand of

the Wrestling Ring had been soaked with blood since long ago.

Today, because of the Da Yuan Tournament, all other activities and events were of course suspended. There were already ten tournament stages put up in the gigantic sandy zone in the center. Later, there would be simultaneously ten groups battling it out on the stages, and it would all be finished after only five rounds.

Ling Han was the seed participant of the fortieth group, so he had to wait until the fourth round to go up onto the stage.

Liu Dong and Zhu Xue Yi were in the first round. One of them was on the first tournament stage, while the other was on the seventh.

There were about seventy people in one group, and the difference in numbers between different groups were in the single digits, because it was possible that there would be some who would forfeit at the last second.

There was absolutely no suspense about the conclusion of the first round. All the victors were the seeded elites. They were all like the Fourth Prince, in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so even if the others all joined forces to gang up on a seeded elite, they were still no match for him. Moreover, in the case of the Fourth Prince, who would actually dare to offend this man who may become the next Da Yuan King? They obviously did not dare to join forces against him.

Additionally, the elites who took part in the first round were also the strongest of the fifty. They were all in the top ten of the previous Da Yuan Tournament, like the Fourth Prince, Jin Wuji and Li Dong Yue.

Occasionally, in the second and the third round, there would be an unknown martial artist who managed to win, but victory did not fall to either Chen Peng Ju and Zhou Chang. The two of them were mercilessly eliminated from the tournament. Thankfully, they'd be able to get another chance three years later. By that time,

it was highly likely that they would have managed to reach the middle stage of Element Gathering Tier and thus become seeded elites, and so would have a bigger chance of advancing to the next round.

This also confirmed the value of the Green Spiritual Fruit. Otherwise, they may have only just reached Element Gathering Tier three years later, so there'd be no second chance for them.

"Han'er, go on!" Ling Dong Xing lightly patted Ling Han's shoulder, smiling brightly. The fourth round was about to begin. Half a year ago, he would have never been able to imagine that it was possible his own son to obtain the place of a seeded elite.

Liu Yu Tong nodded to Ling Han. She did not have the slightest bit of doubt that it was possible for Ling Han to lose.

As a seeded elite, Ling Han was the first person to step onto the stage, while the other participants in his group would follow after. There were about seventy of them, and Feng Luo was one of them.

"Begin!" A warrior in Gushing Spring Tier announced. He had been assigned as a referee by the Royal House of the Da Yuan King.

"Hahahaha, clear the area!" Feng Luo declared proudly. Instantly, there were at least thirty people who drew their weapons simultaneously and gathered with Feng Luo protected in the center. Then, they began to push on towards the others.

The audience below the stage were all dumbfounded. Was this even okay?

It was really too shameless!

Chapter 67: Just A Bunch of Sheep

"This is too despicable!" Downstage, Zhu Xue Yi and the others had all started shouting in anger. No wonder Feng Luo had been so sure of himself. He had apparently bribed some of the martial artists in the same group to work for him.

More than thirty of them were working together, and since this was the fortieth group, the seeded elite would not be too strong, thus they'd be more than enough to sweep away all other contenders.

Then, the others would all leave the stage of their own free will, so the remaining Feng Luo would naturally be able to obtain a place in the top fifty. And he of course would not unreasonably demand to enter the top ten, and definitely not the first place. After all, all top fifty participants were guaranteed to be enrolled into Hu Yang Academy.

"He's too shameless!"

"Completely unfair!"

All the others downstage had started calling out as well. This was an act of openly breaking the tournament regulations.

Yet the referee only gave a cold hump, and shouted, "Shut up!" Since the tournament regulations did not specify that it was not allowed for individual martial artists to join forces, then Feng Luo's actions were of course allowed. It could at most be argued that he had managed to take advantage of a loophole in the rules.

What power and influence a warrior in Gushing Spring Tier possessed? All the people downstage were immediately silenced.

"No wonder that guy had been so confident. He had already bribed some of the others in his group," Zhu Xue Yi said, extremely angry.

"To be ganged up on by so many people, plus at least more than

ten of them have already reached Element Gathering Tier. It would be difficult for Ling Han to fight against the onslaught of so many. He's going to be in big trouble!" Liu Dong frowned.

"Not necessarily!" Li Hao shook his head, and said, "Big Brother Ling should have already reached the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Furthermore, he has even formed four flashes of Sword Qi, so there is still a chance for him to win!"

"He definitely has to win. That guy, Feng Luo, is really too despicable!" The five of them all began to cheer Ling Han on.

Compared to them, Liu Yu Tong and Liu Dong Xing were extremely calm. A bunch of sheep working together would still only be a bunch of sheep. How could they possibly be able to match a mighty lion?

"Hahaha, leave this guy for last. Chase all the others off the stage!" Feng Luo crowed, and commanded the group of more than thirty martial artists to begin wiping out the others. Their combined might was extremely powerful, and due to their cooperation, they had managed to get all the other "outsiders" aside from Ling Han off the stage, and that was with the mere price of seven of their numbers being pulled down alongside their victims.

Now, this was a battle of twenty nine against one--and out of the twenty-nine, fourteen were in Element Gathering Tier!

"Oh no, though this brat is a seeded elite, since he's been arranged to be in the fortieth group, that means that he's most likely only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier."

"Yeah, many ants can kill even an elephant, and the other party even has ten plus warriors in Element Gathering Tier working for him!"

"I really can't bear to look at that guy, Feng Luo's, expression at having his villainous scheme succeeding!"

"Hush, lower your voices. Although the Feng Clan isn't a major clan, Feng Luo's elder brother is a well-known genius in our Da Yuan City. In the last round of Da Yuan Tournament, he managed to defeat the Fourth Prince to get the first place. I heard he's already stepped into Gushing Spring Tier!"

"What, Gushing Spring Tier, is that true?"

"Of course it's true!"

"Hiss, no wonder that guy, Feng Luo, dares to be so arrogant!"

Listening to the discussions of those downstage, Feng Luo felt extremely proud of himself. He did break the rules, but so what?

"What, you guys can't accept this?" He challenged the people downstage, "Bite me if you can! You can do something like this too if you have a good elder brother like me!"

Most of the audience off-stage started gnashing their teeth in hatred. They really felt that this guy was despicable down to the bones, making them all feel the urge to rush onto the stage to give him a good thrashing.

"Ling Han, previously, you made use of the advantage in numbers against me, but this time, I have so many people on my side. Even if every one of them only hit you once, they'd be able to give you a terrible thrashing! If you know what's good for you, then kneel down immediately and beg me for mercy! I may even consider hitting you a few times less!" Feng Luo said, pointing at Ling Han.

Had it been them bullying him because of them having an advantage in numbers previously?

Indeed, at the time, all his lackeys had died, while Ling Han's side had seven people, so that was actually them bullying him because of their advantage in numbers? This guy was indeed shameless to a whole new level.

Ling Han shook his head, and said, "Looks like if I don't hurry up and throw you off the stage and allow a clown like you to continue

your performance, the fury of the masses would probably be incited!"

"Hahahaha," laughter broke out instantly downstage.

"What a hateful guy, you still dare to be so stubborn! I won't spare you!" Feng Luo was driven practically mad from fury. He extended a finger and pointed at Ling Han and said, "Beat him, give him a good beating!"

"Understood!"

The group of more than twenty people all rushed towards Ling Han. All of them were brandishing their respective weapons, presenting a fierce image.

The tournament stage battles allowed the use of weapons. Otherwise, the martial artists would not be able to display their strongest abilities. However, this also increased the danger of the battles. So if you were afraid of dying, then it would be best if you quickly jumped off the stage on your own. If you stayed on the stage, then you should have a certain level of mental preparation.

Ling Han did not bother to use his sword. He charged over with only his fists. Using Dashing Panther Fists would be more than enough to handle these people.

"Peng, peng, peng, peng!"

He charged forward and every single person who stood in his way was flung off stage with a single punch from him. One has to understand that although his cultivation level was only the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, with the eruption of the Five Elements Origin Nuclei, his prowess could be compared with that of a normal person in the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Additionally, the Dashing Panther Fists was a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique, so wouldn't it be more than enough for him to single-handedly deal with these people?

By the time Ling Han reached Feng Luo, all the others had been

thrown off stage by him.

There was absolute silence. Wasn't this guy too powerful? Since he was the seed of the fortieth group, then shouldn't it be obvious that he was only in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier at most? But judging from his ferocious attacks, that was definitely power that was at least of the late stage of Element Gathering Tier!

Could it be that he had deliberately hidden his actual cultivation level, pretending to be a pig to devour the tiger?

However, there were naturally the older generations of the various Great Clans present on this occasion, so there was no lack of people with cultivation levels above the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Naturally, they managed to easily sense Ling Han's aura, and it definitely showed that he was only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

This caused them to be confused as well. They all started murmuring amongst themselves, exchanging their thoughts about how this could be possible.

"No, impossible!" Feng Luo said, shivering. His expression was one of complete disbelief.

The script wasn't supposed to be like this!

He should have successfully and easily entered into Hu Yang Academy. Then, with the care and assistance of his brother, easily break through to Element Gathering Tier. If he was lucky, he'd be able to consume some kind of Spiritual Fruit, and may even be able to break through to Gushing Spring Tier.

But all of his plans were rendered useless if he couldn't manage to enter into Hu Yang Academy.

"Arrogant, ah, just continue being arrogant!"

"Hahahaha, just continue staying on stage... if you dare!"

The people downstage all started taunting Feng Luo. They had

already long been displeased by this guy, but just now, because he had a lot of people on his side, they didn't dare to make too much of a fuss. But what about now? Who would have imagined that Ling Han would actually be so powerful?

"You immediately admit defeat, then get off the stage! Otherwise, I will tell my brother to take care of you!" With the taunting resounding in his ears, Feng Luo finally reacted. He actually pointed at Ling Han, and commanded him to give up.

Ling Han shook his head. This guy had really been spoilt. He was a complete idiot.

"Pa!"

He leapt and aimed a kick at Feng Luo's lower abdomen. "Sou," the guy flew off stage. He held onto his lower abdomen, gasping in pain. It even looked like he was about to tear up from the pain.

"Fortieth group, Ling Han wins!" The referee announced.

"No! This place is mine! It's mine!" When Feng Luo heard this, he actually jumped up and said to the referee, "Change your judgment immediately, or else I'll have my brother beat you to death!"

Everyone else instantly broke out into incredulous laughter. Someone merely in Body Refining Tier actually dared to threaten a warrior of Gushing Spring Tier--it was absolutely hilarious.

"Get lost!" The referee gave a cold humpf. He stretched out a hand and gathered his Origin Power to form a gigantic hand, which took hold of Feng Luo and threw him out.

Chapter 68: The Second Battle

Origin Power being able to take on a form, this was the symbol of a warrior of Gushing Spring Tier.

Surrounded by taunts and mocking laughter, Feng Luo fled with his tail between his legs--if it was not due to the fact that his elder brother, Feng Yan, was indeed an incomparable genius, then that warrior of Gushing Spring Tier absolutely had the right to kill him on the spot.

The most important thing in martial arts was the hierarchy of martial artists, and Feng Luo's previous actions could practically be considered a grave breach of these unspoken rules, so even if he had killed him, the Feng Clan would dare not make a fuss about it.

"Brother Ling, congratulations!"

"Congratulations, Brother Ling, for having such an excellent son."

"Brother Ling, this time you'll have to host a dinner banquet in celebration."

After looking up at the stage, many of the major characters of the various clans of Gray Cloud Town began offering their congratulations to Ling Dong Xing.

Ling Dong Xing naturally laughed loudly at this, absolutely delighted. Before, he had also imagined such a scene happening, but he knew this was not a realistic dream. He never thought that there would be a day that this dream would become reality.

"Hahahaha, this stupid brat is just lucky enough to obtain a place of enrollment into Hu Yang Academy. There shouldn't be any chance of him advancing further than this," he shook his head, looking very modest.

Actually, anyone could see that he was smiling so wide that the corners of his lips seemed like they were about to split apart from

the effort. It was obvious that he was close to being beside himself with joy.

True, whoever it was that had a son that was qualified enough to enter into Hu Yang Academy, he would also smile so proudly.

"Brother Ling, you don't have to be so modest. For those of us who came from Gray Cloud Town, it is already very impressive to be able to enter the top fifty! Moreover, your son is only seventeen years old this year. So he'd still be able to enter the Da Yuan Tournament that will be held three years later and six years later. Who knows, maybe in the next tournament, he'd qualify for the top ten, and in the one after, he'd place first," someone said with a laugh.

Although Ling Han had fought a beautiful battle this time, but still, his opponents this time were really too weak. None of them thought that he, with his cultivation of only the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, would be able to enter the top ten, let alone defeat those in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, like the Fourth Prince.

Ling Dong Xing laughed mischievously. He of course could not say that his son was full of grand ambitions, and that he was aiming directly to get the first place this time.

Honestly, he too did not dare believe it. After all, the gap between cultivation levels was too great.

Ling Han walked down the stage, and everyone stepped forward to offer their congratulations. After all, anyone who managed to enter into Hu Yang Academy had excellent prospects in his future. Who knows, they may be able to become an overnight celebrity and become a person that would hold immense status and power in this Rain Country.

As a result, no one would mind speaking a few words of praise at this moment. In any case, they wouldn't lose anything from it, right? And if Ling Han managed to end up with great achievements

in the future, they'd be able to climb to a higher status using their friendly relations with him.

Ling Dong Xing, as the Clan Head of the Ling Clan, was no stranger to this kind of social niceties. He took care of everything, making everyone feel that they have been paid adequate attention.

Father and son, as well as Liu Yu Tong, returned to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. After one night of rest, the battles to decide the top ten from the fifty who advanced into the second round would take place.

In truth, the top ten would all receive rewards. Of course, the further ahead your placement, the better your prize.

On the other side, Li Hao had also managed to advance into the top fifty, and had demonstrated extraordinary talent with his Saber Qi, causing many people to be very optimistic about his future prospects as there were no more than ten in this generation of young people of Da Yuan City that have managed to form "Qi".

However, some of the senior members of the Li Clan had arrived with Li Hao, so naturally, they had to celebrate with their own people first the night before. Thus, they did not invite Ling Han, and neither did they invite Liu Dong and the others. But once they returned to Guo Rock Town, the Li Clan would definitely hold a grand celebratory banquet.

The next day, Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong once again arrived at the Wrestling Ring of the city. Meanwhile, Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan were in the process of concocting the Reverse Pill, and have long since entered the Oblivious Mode, so they did not come to watch Ling Han compete.

"Big Brother Ling!" Li Hao walked over and stood by his side. He then directed a respectful gaze at the Fourth Prince, Li Dong Yue and the others. They had all been people that he had once idolized and looked up to. He'd never thought that he would be able to compete with them now, causing him to feel unreasonably

exhilarated.

"Do not look down on yourself. You have already formed Saber Qi, so your future achievements will definitely exceed them!" Ling Han said, giving him a comforting pat on the shoulder.

"En!" Li Hao nodded seriously. In truth, the real difference between himself and the Fourth Prince and the others was his lacking cultivation level. But since he's already managed to form Saber Qi, he too would be able to become a ruler amongst those of the same cultivation level in future.

"Brother Ling!" When they saw Ling Han approach, the Fourth Prince and the others clasped their hands politely and spoke up in greeting.

Li Hao could not help gaping at this. This Ling Han was really too popular, wasn't he? As if he was the moon which the stars could only revolve around. Even the Fourth Prince was not as popular as he was!

That was natural. Currently, there stood three dignified Black Grade alchemists behind him, so from a certain angle, he was even more influential than the Da Yuan King.

"The battles to decide the Top Ten will begin now!" The Chief Butler appeared. His eyes were squinted, making him look like a doddering old man. However, his voice was extremely loud and clear, spreading to every nook and cranny of the Wrestling Ring.

"The rules are very simple. There are ten tournament stages here. Choose any which one and walk onto the stage. If there's no one there, then you will be the Stage Master. If there's already someone, then you will challenge the Stage Master."

"Everyone will only have a single chance to challenge the Stage Master."

"By sundown, the ten people who are remaining on the tournament stage will be the Top Ten."

This was indeed very simple. They simply had to battle it out.

When the Chief Butler had finished speaking, the majority of the participants all looked at the Fourth Prince, Li Dong Yue, and the others. These people possessed overwhelming power, so if any of the others wanted to obtain a place in the Top Ten, then they'd definitely want to avoid encountering these powerful warriors.

The Fourth Prince laughed loudly, and exuded the air of a ruler. He gave a great leap and landed on the first tournament stage, where he stood with his arms crossed behind his waist, waiting to be challenged.

"I'll present myself first!" Li Dong Yue leapt onto the second tournament stage.

Jin Wuji, Baili Teng Yun, Xia Zhong and the others also respectively claimed a tournament stage, and in an instant, seven tournament stages were "owned". These people all had absolute confidence and were not the slightest bit worried that they'd be tired out by fighting one battle after another.

Ling Han took one step forward, also preparing to step onto one of the remaining stages.

"Big Brother Ling, let's just wait until the afternoon. We'll have a bigger chance that way," Li Hao hurriedly advised.

"Haha, it's fine. There are not many here who can match me," Ling Han gave a nonchalant wave of his hand. He gave a great leap and landed on the eighth tournament stage.

Soon after, the ninth and tenth tournament stages were also occupied, and with that, the ten Stage Masters have appeared. Now, it was time to see who would go up to challenge them.

"I'll go!" Someone jumped up onto the tenth tournament stage and the first battle began. Right after, another person leapt up onto the ninth tournament stage. But what made the audience feel very curious about was that no one actually went to challenge Ling

Han.

There was no lack of elites in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier here, so naturally they should be able to sense that Ling Han was only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier. So theoretically, this kind of cultivation level was the lowest of all ten Stage Masters, but why didn't anyone go up to challenge him?

They didn't understand. The majority of those who advanced into the top fifty had attended the Fourth Prince's banquet just a few days ago, so of course they knew that Ling Han actually had the support of three Black Grade alchemists. Who would dare challenge him?

Do you not intend to give face to the three alchemists behind Ling Han?

In any case, aside from the Fourth Prince, Li Dong Yue, and other such powerful warriors, there were still two or three slightly weaker competitors. So there was no need for them to stir up the hornet's nest that was Ling Han.

But of course, the unexpected could still happen.

"I will challenge you!" A young man jumped up onto Ling Han's tournament stage. He was a dark horse that had suddenly appeared in the Da Yuan Tournament this time, so he had not received an invitation to the Fourth Prince's banquet a few days ago. As a result, he naturally had no idea of Ling Han's background.

Chapter 69: Top Ten

"My name is Du Zheng Ying. Remember my name, because soon, this name will be known all around the world!" The young man exclaimed proudly.

This man looked to be in his early twenties, and his cultivation level was the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Who knew where he got such overwhelming self-confidence from.

But only he himself knew that he had only been in the ninth layer of Body Refining Tier two years ago, and could not manage to break through to Element Gathering Tier. Yet he obtained a fateful encounter, which caused his cultivation level to spike up. After only two years, he was already in the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

After such instantaneous success, he naturally became condescending towards everything, and thought that he'd be able to reach the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier next year and break through to Gushing Spring Tier in the year after, sweeping away all the other geniuses and elites of the world.

Ling Han smiled calmly, and said, "Being too idle would be a bit boring anyways, so I'll play with you for a while."

"How dare you!" Du Zheng Ying leapt forward suddenly, the long saber at his waist drawn. The light of the saber flickered, exuding a coldness like frost. He gave a loud shout and brandished his saber in a slash, which formed a terrifying cold flash that flew towards Ling Han's waist.

The advantage of a sword was its lightness, while the saber had its ferocity. This saber slash was fierce and merciless, so it did have a certain level of standard.

Ling Han drew his sword, and with a 'ding', the blade of the sword screamed as it passed over the saber's blade all the way to

the hilt of the saber, easily dispersing the power of this slash as it kicked up a rain of sparks.

The blade of Du Zheng Ying's saber stopped at a spot three inches below Ling Han's rib, but its energy was completely exhausted and it was no longer a threat.

"You do have some ability," Du Zheng Ying snorted coldly, "But in front of me, all that is pointless effort! I'm destined to be a genius that will become world-famous. Everyone else is only fated to become stepping stones on my path to advance, to be mercilessly swept away by me!"

He resumed his offensive. "Shua, shua, shua," the saber flashed, striking with considerable power.

Those who were standing downstage were completely struck speechless. They have seen many proud people, but Du Zheng Ying was not just proud anymore. He was already arrogant to the point that he didn't know his own measure.

Ling Han casually parried his attacks. In any case, the tournament stage battles would only end by sundown, so there was no difference whether he defeated Du Zheng Ying sooner or later.

Du Zheng Ying shouted and yelled, using all his ultimate techniques. From the look of it, he was at an absolute advantage.

He naturally thought that this was to be expected. His opponent was only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, a whole two layers below him, so how could Ling Han be a match for him? To be able to disregard the gap between cultivation levels and challenge one at a higher cultivation level was of course something that only he could do.

"Hahahaha, not bad, not bad. I have to admit that you really are not bad. But everything will cease at this point, I'm about to get serious!" Du Zheng Ying laughed loudly, causing everyone else to think that he was even more of an idiot than before.

His expression grew serious, and he once again brandished his blade. "Shua," there actually appeared a flash of Saber Qi!

"Yi!"

"En!"

Gasps exploded downstage all of a sudden.

"Saber Qi!"

"It can't be! That's the sign of a ruler!"

"I didn't realize that this egomaniac was actually quite capable."

"This time, Ling Han should not be able to parry his attacks anymore."

"I heard that there are no more than ten within this generation that have managed to grasp 'Qi'!"

Du Zheng Ying was very proud of himself. If it was not because he had managed to form Saber Qi, how would he dare keep such a high profile? He laughed loudly, and said, "To be able to make me use Saber Qi, you should feel very honored!"

Ling Han shook his head and said in disappointment, "You only have one flash of Saber Qi?"

'Hey, hey, hey, what kind of expression is that? Isn't one flash of Saber Qi already very awesome?' Du Zheng Yi was extremely displeased. After seeing him forming Saber Qi, this brat was still not scared witless?

"It's enough to defeat you a hundred times!" He yelled loudly. He started brandishing his saber in a dance, and his Saber Qi moved unhindered. The power behind it was extremely terrifying.

Ling Han laughed, and casually waved his own sword in a slash, similarly producing a flash of Sword Qi.

"Pu!"

Everyone downstage choked in shock.

Those who managed to form "Qi" would have the potential to be a ruler in martial arts. But normally, four flashes of "Qi" would be regarded as a minor accomplishment, seven flashes as a major accomplishment, while ten flashes would be completion. And only those who managed to reach the level of minor accomplishment had the right to be named as rulers.

But even if only one flash of "Qi" was formed, that was already a very big deal, as it was extremely rare. Thus, now that there appeared two people who have both managed to form "Qi" and were even battling on the same stage, it naturally caused everyone to gasp in surprise.

...This was something that they had expected would only happen at tomorrow's battle, at the very least.

"What, you actually also have Sword Qi?" Du Zheng Ying's eyes were wide with astonishment. He looked extremely shocked.

"Is this very odd?" Ling Han said with a laugh.

"Heng, so what if you possess Sword Qi, you'll definitely still be no match for me!" Du Zheng Ying raised his saber up high, standing in an attacking stance.

The fateful encounter that he had obtained included a book of Saber Arts and a bottle of alchemical pills. The alchemical pills allowed him to break through to Element Gathering Tier and also caused his cultivation to soar. The book of Saber Arts was also extraordinary. It contained two different stages. The first stage was a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique, whereas the second stage was upgraded to Black Grade low level.

He was only in Element Gathering Tier, so naturally only managed to learn the first stage. Yet it already allowed him to form Saber Qi, which was proof enough of the extraordinary power of this Saber Arts technique.

"Cleaving Mountain Saber Arts!" He roared loudly. He

brandished his saber in a slash, and the Saber Qi he produced looked like a dragon, extremely dazzling and possessing a terrifying level of power.

Ling Han's sword rose in a slant, using the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts, and the Sword Qi he possessed flew forwards.

"Peng!"

Sword Qi and Saber Qi crashed into one another and caused a sudden explosion. A dazzling light appeared, and it was visible that the Saber Qi was actually completely shattered by Ling Han's attack. His Sword Qi, like a rainbow, continued forward to cut into Du Zheng Ying's chest. Instantly, blood splattered.

"Ah..." Du Zheng Ying gave a pained shout, and was flung directly offstage by the power of the Sword Qi.

"Si!"

Everyone was overwhelmed with shock. Both martial artists had formed Qi, yet why was there such a big gap between their respective power?

There were only a few who had also managed to form "Qi"; it was only them that knew that there were stronger and weaker "Qi". It was definitely not something that guaranteed you success if you just manage to form it. However, no matter how weak it was, it was still Qi, so it was impossible that it couldn't even withstand a single attack. Otherwise, it wouldn't be so difficult to form Qi in the first place.

That could only mean one thing--Ling Han's Sword Qi possessed overwhelming power!

Even the Fourth Prince, Li Dong Yue and the other Stage Masters who occupied the earlier stages revealed expressions of shock. This kind of attack power caused even them to be slightly surprised. Yet they thought that their cultivation level was so much higher than Ling Han, so they absolutely could still suppress him with their

much stronger prowess.

Such an easy victory also caused Ling Han's image to become stronger and taller, letting everyone know that he was not as simple as simply depending on three alchemists as support for himself.

The challenges continued. Most of the people had focused their attention on the ninth and tenth tournament stages. The Stage Masters of these two stages were the weakest and had already expended much energy during the continuous battles. This was the best path to obtain a place in the top ten for everyone else.

When the sun set, the top ten martial artists were decided.

There was not much surprise this time round, as the top ten were mostly within expectations. Though Li Hao tried his best in his battles, his lacking cultivation level was a very solid disadvantage. The best he could do was to fight evenly with someone in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, but against a stronger person, he could only accept defeat.

Ling Dong Xing was again surrounded by the masses. Most of them had not thought that Ling Han could actually manage to advance into the top ten. This was an extremely huge honor. In future, he may even have a chance of becoming a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier.

This naturally caused Ling Dong Xing to beam with joy. When he saw that his son managed to attain such an accomplishment, he was the most delighted out of all of them.

If he advanced one step further the next day, then he'd be able to get the Dark Moon Grass.

Ling Han was filled with anticipation.

Chapter 70: Son of Heaven Fist Technique

The night passed silently. On the next day, the third round of the Da Yuan Tournament continued.

This was the finals, and today, the first place winner would be decided.

"Can Han'er really get the first place?" Ling Dong Xing was both expectant and anxious. Before the tournament began, he believed that his son would be able to at least advance into the top fifty, but dared not dream that he would also make into the top ten. After all, Ling Han's cultivation level was honestly still too low.

But Ling Han's extraordinary success the previous day had been a very joyous surprise to Ling Dong Xing, making a sliver of expectation for that illusory first place rise in him. However, on the path to that first place, there stood powerful warriors like the Fourth Prince, Li Dong Yue, and Jin Wuji. Even if he himself was the one competing, he couldn't be sure that he would win--what more his son.

Initially, it was fine because he didn't really bear any real expectations. But now that a spark of hope had flickered to life within him, he had become worried about winning and losing.

Liu Yu Tong smiled, and said, "You don't have to worry, Uncle. Since Ling Han said he can get the first place, then he'll definitely get the first place!"

Ling Dong Xing was astounded, this girl actually had more confidence in his son than even him! Looks like her affections for Ling Han have become deeply rooted! When he thought about this, he no longer bothered to worry too much about the first place. If his son could obtain such an excellent partner, then he really would die happy.

"The regulations for today's tournament round are as follows!"

The Chief Butler continued to be the host of the tournament, "You shall go up onto the ten tournament stages according to yesterday's order. This would be your temporary placement. Anyone who is ranked lower can challenge the person one rank higher. If you win, you will replace him. But if you lose, you can only stay on your own stage and defend, and you will no longer be able to issue any challenges.

When everyone has lost the right to challenge others, or when the sun sets, your final rankings will be confirmed.

After every battle, both sides will have half an hour to rest. In that time, you may only challenge, but cannot be challenged."

The moment the Chief Butler finished talking, Li Dong Yue took a great leap and arrived on the first tournament stage. He said, "Fourth Prince, I would like to challenge you."

"Haha, I too want to see if your Little Tianyuan Hands has advanced to the seventh level," Qi Yong Ye laughed heartily. He leapt up and also arrived on the tournament stage.

"It will definitely not disappointment you!" Li Dong Yue gave a long hiss, raised his hands and charged towards Qi Yong Ye in attack.

The two of them were both in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Three years ago, they were close rivals, but the Fourth Prince was slightly better. These three years, Li Dong Yue had buried himself in cultivation, and there was an extremely obvious improvement in his abilities.

"Brother Li, your improvement is indeed very large, but if I have to be honest, it was a great miscalculation on your part to stay in Da Yuan City in a sulk," Qi Yong Ye displayed a fist technique. Every fist was imposingly majestic, like the arrival of a noble ruler. It not only possessed great force but also the ability to shake the heart, causing a powerful shudder to rise up from the depths of their hearts.

"The imperial city is the real Sacred Land of Martial Arts. There, you will encounter even stronger opponents, and every one of them is so strong that it will give you the shivers. Under this kind of pressure, the improvement in my abilities is far from what you can imagine!"

Take this, my Son of Heaven Fist Technique!"

"Hong, hong, hong," his movements were very pronounced and every fist possessed overbearing power. A layer of Qi was wrapped around his fists, increasing the might behind each blow.

It was Fist Qi!

Li Dong Yue was very shocked. He could only retreat in the face of Qi Yong Ye's fists. His expression revealed deep regret.

Three years ago, he had only been slightly weaker than Qi Yong Ye. After a tough battle of at least five hundred moves, he had been defeated due to being at a very slight disadvantage. Yet now, the battle had only just begun, and he was already suppressed by his opponent. He didn't even have the opportunity to fight back against the Fourth Prince's terrifying fist technique.

"Peng," he received a heavy punch and his figure retreated continuously. A sliver of blood could be seen at the corners of his lips.

"I am not a match for you!" He said bitterly. They were both in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, yet he was not just a slight bit weaker than his opponent. His opponent was on a wholly different level than himself.

"This is the Son of Heaven Fist Technique taught to me by His Imperial Majesty. There is no shame in losing to this fist technique!" Qi Yong Ye smiled, giving his opponent a way out.

His Imperial Majesty was a powerful warrior of Spiritual Pedestal Tier. How could any martial arts technique that he taught not be extremely powerful?

"There are four different levels for this fist technique. The power of the first level reaches a Yellow Grade high level technique, the second level is a Black Grade low level, the third level is a Black Grade medium level, and the fourth level is a Black Grade high level martial arts technique!" Qi Yong Ye said with a smile, "His Imperial Majesty has a fondness for talent, and there is a considerable number of geniuses in the imperial city who have been taught the Son of Heaven Fist Technique."

On the spectators' seats, everyone had exclaimed in surprise. The Fourth Prince was really too powerful. In the previous Da Yuan Tournament, Li Dong Yue could still manage a tie with the Fourth Prince, but this time, he couldn't even hold on for ten moves!

They all looked at the Fourth Prince with envy. The fourth level of the Son of Heaven Fist Technique was equivalent to a Black Grade high level martial arts technique. If they actually managed to learn up to that level... unfortunately, although His Imperial Majesty was fond of talent, how could he possibly pass on a Black Grade high level martial arts technique so easily. At most, he should have only passed on the first and second level.

But, a Black Grade low level martial arts technique was awesome enough. One has to know that even among the Great Clans of Da Yuan City there were not many clans who had in their possession a Black Grade martial arts technique.

"How about it? Brother Li, are you interested to come with me to the Hu Yang Academy this time?" Qi Yong Ye laughed.

Li Dong Yue could not stop a slightly moved expression from showing on his face. The gap in power between himself and the Fourth Prince allowed him to finally gain his resolve. Da Yuan City was too small. He had to go out of this city to be able to obtain a greater improvement.

He returned to the second tournament stage, and the battles continued. However, because he had just battled, no one could

challenge him yet.

"Jin Wuji, I would like to challenge you," from the fourth tournament stage, Baili Teng Yun gave a long hiss and leapt up onto the third tournament stage.

Jin Wuji smiled serenely and crossed his arms behind his back, looking very casual. He stretched his arms a bit then said, "Then I'll give you a bit of guidance."

He was also a disciple of Hu Yang Academy. After three years of hard work at cultivation, the improvement to his abilities was obvious. The only person that he took seriously among the other competitors was the Fourth Prince.

The two of them began their battle. Baili Teng Yun was indeed extraordinary to be able to break through to the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier at the mere age of seventeen years old. His prowess was only slightly weaker than Jin Wuji's and every move he made was powerful, causing the expressions of quite a few of the "seniors" in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier to waver as they pondered that, if it was them battling against him, there was a possibility that they would be completely defeated.

Yet Jin Wuji moved very skillfully, and with a single hand, he easily dispersed the power behind Baili Teng Yun's every attack, showing that he possessed a power greater than his opponent's.

"He really proves himself to have returned from Hu Yang Academy."

"He's really too powerful."

"They're all in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, but most of them may not be a match for one tenth of Jin Wuji!"

"For this tournament, we only need to look at him and the Fourth Prince. One of the two of them would definitely get the first place."

"True, there's definitely no doubt about it."

Hearing the discussions of the people around him, Baili Teng Yun gave a 'hn' and drew a short staff from behind him. He gave it a light shake, and from both ends, there actually appeared another section. It had transformed into a staff of about two metres in length.

It was made from some unknown kind of material. The whole staff was as black as ink.

"I heard that the Baili Sect has an ultimate treasure. Rumor has it that it was the weapon of an ultimate warrior, and was refined by this warrior over many days and nights. It possesses a terrifying destructive ability. Could this be it?" Jin Wuji asked.

"Yes, this is the Staff of Destruction!" Baili Teng Yun nodded and gave the staff a light wave. "Weng," the black staff trembled slightly and a powerful shock wave spread out from it.

"Then let me experience attacks from this Staff of Destruction!" Jin Wuji revealed a solemn expression. This solemnity was not because of Baili Teng Yun, but because of the Staff of Destruction.

Chapter 71: Spirit Weapon

Seeing the appearance of the Staff of Destruction, even Ling Han revealed an expression of utmost seriousness.

After a martial artist has reached the Spiritual Ocean Tier, they would be able to use their own Origin Power to refine weapons, making the attack power of the weapon soar. The higher the cultivation level of the martial artist, the more powerful his weapon would be. For example, the weapon used by a powerful warrior of Heaven Tier would be able to instantly eliminate a martial artist in Deity Transformation Tier.

'If I could find the weapon I used in my last life, "Cloud Dragon Sword", that'd be great. I'd be invincible in the whole of Rain Country,' Ling Han thought yet quickly laughed in spite of himself. With his current cultivation level, he couldn't even get within one hundred metres of Cloud Dragon Sword. If he did, then he'd definitely be directly shattered by the aura of a weapon used by a powerful warrior of Heaven Tier.

'But even if I could obtain Cloud Dragon Sword now, I wouldn't use it anyways. Otherwise, training myself in this life would lose its significance!'

While he had been thinking pensively, Baili Teng Yun and Jin Wuji had began a fierce battle. The Staff of Destruction was indeed very powerful. After pouring Origin Power into it, a few seals actually lit up on the body of the staff. However, these seals should be covering the whole body of the staff, yet only a mere few had lit up.

With the aid of the powerful Staff of Destruction, Baili Teng Yun regained his footing in the battle. But it was still very far from allowing him to gain victory. Even so, many people were still gasping in shock at the power and might of the Staff of Destruction.

"It truly deserves to be the weapon used by a powerful warrior!"

"I heard that this kind of weapon is also known as Spirit Weapon. Apparently, it seems to have its own intelligence, and is able to help its user increase his battle prowess. Unfortunately, only powerful warriors that have reached Spiritual Ocean Tier at least are able to refine these kinds of weapons. In the whole Da Yuan City, only our Da Yuan King has this kind of ability."

"So, according to you, wouldn't that mean that everyone in the Royal House of the Da Yuan King could have a Spirit Weapon of their own?"

"How could that be possible! Firstly, this kind of weapon has to be able to sustain the Origin Power of a martial artist of Spiritual Ocean Tier. Otherwise, if such powerful Origin Power is poured into it day and night, it'd very quickly shatter. Moreover, to produce a Spirit Weapon, a normal weapon would have to be nurtured by a powerful warrior of Spiritual Ocean Tier for twenty years or more!"

"Just think, when the Da Yuan King broke through to the Spiritual Ocean Tier, how old was he? Even if materials were sufficient, how many Spirit Weapons could the King forge?"

"I see."

Yet Ling Han only shook his head in disappointment. Many years ago, this Staff of Destruction may have been very extraordinary, but now, because of extremely severe deterioration, the spiritual seals engraved on it were almost completely destroyed. There was barely one percent of its original power remaining.

However, in a place such as Da Yuan City, even a ruined Spirit Weapon could create an extremely large commotion. After all, even the materials it was made of were extremely valuable on their own.

The two young men continued exchanging blows, battling

fiercely.

In terms of power, Jin Wuji possessed an absolute advantage. However, Baili Teng Yun possessed a Spirit Weapon, even if it was a weakened one. It still allowed him to possess great power and fight with Jin Wuji on equal terms.

After the two fighters had exchanged a few hundred blows, Jin Wuji still managed to claim victory due to his more plentiful experience. Meanwhile, after Baili Teng Yun had lost this battle, he could only claim the fourth place in this tournament at the very most.

He was extremely dissatisfied about this kind of result, but in the minds of the others, this was already very impressive.

After all, Baili Teng Yung was only eighteen years old this year. Who would be able to match him in the next tournament, or the one after? However, Jin Wuji managed to win more praise and compliments.

"He is indeed Jin Wuji. He's really way too powerful. Even producing a Spirit Weapon is not enough to suppress him!"

"Looks like Li Dong Yue is no longer a match for him, but I don't know who is stronger, him or the Fourth Prince."

"If it was in the past, I would definitely think that the Fourth Prince is stronger, but now, I think Jin Wuji also has a very high chance of victory."

"En, me too."

After the battle with Baili Teng Yun, Jin Wuji's fame reached a whole new level. He had already surpassed Li Dong Yue and was already shoulder to shoulder with the Fourth Prince's level. This caused Li Dong Yue to feel much regret. If he had known this would happen, he would have gone to Hu Yang Academy three years ago.

Jin Wuji began to regain his composure. Very soon, he would be

issuing a challenge to Li Dong Yue, and after that, he would be facing the Fourth Prince directly.

The other competitors also began issuing their own challenges.

Ling Han did not stay idle. Because there was a limited half an hour's time for rest, he had to make full use of his time. Otherwise, if two of the competitors ahead of him battled for too long, causing him to have to wait impatiently for the half an hour of resting time to pass, he might not have enough time to challenge all the way to the first place.

He issued a challenge to the seventh Stage Master.

This was a young man who looked to be about twenty years old. With a long sword strapped to his back and a tall, slender figure, he appeared very confident and at ease.

The typical weapons martial artists used were either sabers or swords. But the higher the cultivation level, the weirder and rarer weapons became common as well. For example, umbrellas, pagodas, mirrors, or even pens that, with a single wave, could split rivers and break mountains, possessing terrifying power.

"I am Lian Tao. Please offer your guidance, Brother Ling," the young man said, clasping his hands in greeting.

"Please!" Ling Han clasped his hands in response.

"Ha!" Lian Tao drew his sword and it was as if the sword and the wielder had become one, flying towards Ling Han.

Seventh layer of Element Gathering Tier!

Ling Han fearlessly brandished his own sword in a parry. Although he was in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, with the added support of the Five Elements Origin Nuclei, his actual ability could be compared to the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier. He was no longer weaker than his opponent. Moreover, he still possessed the Lone Wolf's Blood which could further increase his power. In terms of power, he would definitely

not lose to any normal person in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

Otherwise, he would not have dared to say with such certainty and confidence that he would get the first place in this tournament.

"Ding, ding, ding, ding," the two of them were soon embroiled in a fierce battle. Their respective swords continuously met each other in a clash, repeatedly producing fiery sparks due to the friction between their blades.

The reason why Lian Tao had been able to qualify for the Top Ten was because his cultivation level was high enough. However, he could not really be considered as a genius because he had not managed to produce Sword Qi. The sword arts technique he was using was also only a Yellow Grade low level martial arts technique. Additionally, he had only reached the minor accomplishment level in this sword arts technique.

The advantage of a high cultivation level was a stronger power, but now even the power he had gained from his cultivation level was no match for Ling Han. So how could he still possibly win?

After only a few moves, he had fallen into an absolute disadvantage.

'There are three Black Grade alchemists standing behind this person. Additionally, it's impossible for me to get the first place. Then there isn't much of a difference between the seventh and eighth place anyways. Why don't I do him a favor and forfeit directly? I will help him save some Origin Power this way!' Lian Tao thought.

He suddenly retreated a few steps. Withdrawing his sword, he said, "I am no match for Brother Ling. I forfeit!"

Eh? He forfeited? Just like that?

When Ling Han looked at the knowing smile on his opponent's

face, understanding dawned on him. Lian Tao was deliberately doing him a favor. He could not help smiling in spite of himself. If he really had put in full effort, he would be able to instantly defeat his opponent in one move!

However, whether he needed it or not, Lian Tao had still done him a favor, so he nodded in acknowledgement at Lian Tao.

The two of them exchanged tournament stages.

Ling Han did not rest. This battle did not expend much of his Origin Power, so he immediately issued a challenge to the sixth Stage Master.

The Stage Master of this stage was Xia Zhong Guang, a genius that had just recently emerged in the past two years. He was in the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

"Brother Ling, please!" Xia Zhong Guang said very politely. Although he was very proud due to his young age and had a very high opinion of himself, the fact that Ling Han had three Black Grade alchemists behind him still caused him to obediently put away his usually arrogant attitude.

"Please!" Ling Han replied politely. If a person treated you respectfully, so must you be respectful in response.

The two of them moved at the same moment. Xia Zhong Guang's weapon was a spear and he had also managed to form Spear Qi. When he waved his two meter long spear in a dance, the might behind his movements was overbearingly powerful. It had fully displayed the unique trait of a spear, which was: the longer it was, the more powerful it was.

Chapter 72: Repeatedly Throwing the Match

Ling Han used the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts, not displaying any weakness or conceding in any way.

Xia Zhong Guang was indeed very strong. With one wave of the spear, he actually managed to form two flashes of Spear Qi!

"Si!"

A round of surprised gasps broke out downstage. Two flashes of "Qi", this could be considered a very outstanding accomplishment among the younger generation of Da Yuan City, especially since Xia Zhong Guang was really too young! He was only eighteen years old this year!

By the time he had reached the current age of the Fourth Prince, Li Dong Yue and Jin Wuji, how many flashes of Qi would he be able to form? Three flashes? Or even four flashes, the real sign of having stepped into the ranks of rulers?

"Two flashes, huh?"

Ling Han smiled softly, and with a wave of his sword, two flashes of Sword Qi similarly appeared.

"Pu!"

Everyone once again choked. They hadn't even recovered from their first shock, and here comes another? Ling Han had also managed to form the second flash of Sword Qi? Could Da Yuan City be about to emerge as a new power? One genius after another appeared in close succession!

Xia Zhong Guang was also extremely astonished. Indeed, he had formed the first flash of Qi through hard work and effort, but the second flash was something he had obtained when he accidentally entered into an ancient tomb, where he came into contact with a strange stone plaque. He had lost consciousness at that point, and "saw" many memories that were now his own. After he woke up,

he discovered that he had somehow formed a second flash of Spear Qi.

Could it be that Ling Han had somehow obtained this kind of chance encounter too? If he hadn't, then he really was too terrifying. To be able to form two flashes of Sword Qi at the young age of seventeen years old, he was practically a monster!

Xia Zhong Guang continued to be on the offensive for a long while yet did not seem to be making any progress. He could not help feeling a bit dispirited, and when he recalled that Lian Tao before him, he could not help thinking, 'There are three Black Grade alchemists standing behind this person, while I am obviously no match for the Fourth Prince. Then, what difference is there between the sixth and seventh place? Why don't I take this chance to do him a favor then?'

When his thoughts turned in this direction, he resolutely ceased his attack and said, "Brother Ling is indeed extraordinarily strong, I forfeit!"

Why was there another forfeit? Weren't they obviously locked in a stalemate, with neither fighter having an advantage over the other?

Aside from those few who had attended the Fourth Prince's banquet a few days ago, the rest was very confused. But still, Ling Han had showed that he had formed two flashes of Sword Qi in this battle, and so indeed proved that he was more powerful than Lian Tao. So Lian Tao's forfeit could be claimed as him having "foresight".

Could it be that Ling Han was actually even more powerful than what he had shown up to now, and that was the reason why Xia Zhong Guang had simply forfeited the battle?

Ling Han shook his head, smiled and said, "Brother Xia is too humble."

"Let me offer my best wishes that Brother Ling may obtain an even better result. Let us be on closer terms in the future please!" Xia Zhong Guang leapt onto the seventh tournament stage.

It was at this moment that Jin Wuji too had issued a challenge--the other party being Li Dong Yue. There was no suspense about the result. Within a mere ten moves, Li Dong Yue had been defeated by Jin Wuji. The longing he felt to enter into Hu Yang Academy also intensified with this loss.

Holding onto this momentum firmly, Jin Wuji continued on to challenge the Fourth Prince.

Ling Han had no interest in watching the battles of others. After a short rest, he continued on to challenge the fifth Stage Master.

The fifth Stage Master was Liu Yu. He was also a genius that had only emerged within the last two years.

Because these two big battles were ongoing at the same time, majority of the spectators went over to watch the battle between the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji. Only people like Ling Dong Xing, Liu Yu Tong and Li Hao paid attention to Ling Han's battle.

"Brother Ling, please!" Liu Yu was also very polite. It could be argued that no one in the whole of Rain Country dared to ignore the existence of a Black Grade alchemist, and there were as many as three such alchemists standing behind Ling Han.

"Please!" Ling Han brandished his sword in an elaborate wave. His first move was two flashes of Sword Qi. Since he had already revealed a portion of his true prowess, he did not continue to hide it.

Liu Yu could be said to be tied with Xia Zhong Guang in terms of prowess. Since Xia Zhong Guang was no match for Ling Han, naturally Liu Yu wasn't either. After exchanging a few tens of moves, Liu Yu could not help thinking, 'There are three Black Grade alchemists standing behind this person, and in any case, I

wouldn't be able to get the first place, so why not do him a favor...'

As a result, Liu Yu too very frankly forfeited.

Thankfully, most of the spectators' attention had been drawn to the huge battle between the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji. Otherwise, there'd definitely be suspicions about this tournament being feigned.

Ling Han again rose to a higher ranking, and ahead of him only stood four people--Baili Teng Yun, Li Dong Yue, Jin Wuji, and Qi Yong Ye.

Who would have thought this would happen before the tournament?

Ling Dong Xing could not help growing excited. If Ling Han managed to defeat Baili Teng Yun, he'd gain the right to battle with Jin Wuji and the Fourth Prince. Getting the first place was no longer a dream.

The great battle between Qi Yong Ye and Jin Wuji was still continuing. The two young geniuses both made a very powerful display. One was using palm techniques while the other was using fist techniques. They have both formed "Qi", and there were as many as three flashes on each side, so they already possessed the preliminary demeanor of a ruler.

And it was at this moment that Ling Han issued a challenge to Baili Teng Yun.

Ling Dong Xing became even more anxious. If Ling Han emerged victorious from this battle, then he'd doubtlessly be able to defeat Li Dong Yue and ascend to the third place.

Top three, that was impressive enough. Could he still ask for more?

"Brother Ling!" Baili Teng Yun was also very polite towards Ling Han. He did not even put on any airs as the Young Sect Master of the Baili Sect. He was even friendlier than he had been with the

Fourth Prince. After all, if the Fourth Prince did not manage to inherit the position of the Da Yuan King, then his status could not be compared to even himself as the First Prince would definitely do his utmost to suppress him.

But Ling Han was different. There were three Black Grade alchemists standing behind him.

"Please!"

"Please!"

The two fighters respectively spoke a word of invitation. Baili Teng Yun directly drew his Staff of Destruction and said, "Brother Ling is very powerful. If I do not try my best, then that would be the greatest disrespect to Brother Ling."

"Haha, then let me also experience the might of a Spirit Weapon," Ling Han said with a smile as he lightly waved the long sword in his hand, producing a soft hum.

"Take care then!" Baili Teng Yun harnessed the black staff and charged in a ferocious attack towards Ling Han. Seven seals lit up in close succession and half a black skull appeared, pouncing towards Ling Han.

This black skull contained a sliver of will of a powerful warrior. Initially, it would be able to create an invisible pressure on a martial artist in Gushing Spring Tier and directly shatter the spirit of a martial artist of Element Gathering Tier. However, because too much time had passed, this Spirit Weapon had also experienced serious deterioration. Its power had long since degraded from how it initially was and this skull could only produce a limited effect on a martial artist of Element Gathering Tier now.

But if it wasn't because for that, Baili Teng Yun wouldn't have been able to wield this Spirit Weapon with his current strength.

Though Ling Han was no longer the powerful warrior of Heaven

Tier he had been in the past and there only remained a sliver of will of a warrior of Heaven Tier within him, Heaven Tier was still Heaven Tier. Even if it was a mere sliver, it was enough to sweep away all challengers without contention. This black skull was not able to affect him the slightest bit.

He used the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts. His sword was like a rainbow; "ding, ding, ding, ding," the sword and staff repeatedly clashed, creating friction. Two flashes of Sword Qi moved unhindered, and there was no sign of Ling Han falling into a disadvantageous position.

"Quick, look there. Ling Han is having a great battle with Baili Teng Yun!"

"What, he's actually so powerful?"

"No wonder Xia Zhong Guang and the others forfeited so fast previously. They had already known that Ling Han was so powerful!"

"Damn, when did this kind of freak appear? He's just in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and he's actually powerful to this extent!"

More and more people were attracted to that battle. They felt that a single pair of eyes was not enough for them. They wanted to watch the clash of the strongest between the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji, but they also wanted to watch the battle of the brightest of the younger generation between Ling Han and Baili Teng Yun.

Chapter 73: Four Flashes of Sword Qi

There were only a rare few that knew that Ling Han had not yet displayed his full abilities, because he had only used two flashes of Sword Qi while his limit was actually four. And only Ling Han knew that he had not yet stimulated Lone Wolf's Blood, which would actually upgrade his battle prowess to yet another level.

This was mainly because Ling Han's will was strong enough, so the influence of the Staff of Destruction on the battle was barely visible. This meant that Baili Teng Yun's attacks were mostly dependent on his own power, and he was on a lower level than Li Dong Yue, so how could he possibly be a match for Ling Han?

In this fierce battle and clash of the young generation, Ling Han was gradually gaining the upper hand!

"Hey! Hey! Even Jin Wuji hadn't had such an easy time fighting him, right? Does that mean that Ling Han is even stronger than Jin Wuji?" Someone exclaimed in shock.

"That can't be... the power behind every one of his attacks is inferior to Jin Wuji's, so how is it possible that he's stronger than Jin Wuji?" Someone else immediately retorted.

"But why did Jin Wuji have such a hard time during his battle, yet Ling Han so easily got the upper hand?"

"This..."

None of them knew about the fact that the Staff of Destruction had the ability to suppress the opponent's spirit, so of course they did not understand why Ling Han could easily suppress Baili Teng Yun when his attacks were obviously on a weaker level than Jin Wuji's attacks. They were still perplexed even after much thought.

Meanwhile, Baili Teng Yun had started thinking, 'The few people before me had obviously done Ling Han a favor. If I don't do the same, he may resent me! Moreover, I obviously can't get the first

place anyways, so what difference is there between the fourth and fifth place?"

When his thoughts took this turn, he quickly drew his staff back and retreated. He said, "Brother Ling is indeed very powerful. I forfeit!"

Damn, why was there another forfeit again?

The spectators were just starting to get excited from watching the battle. How come this Baili Teng Yun did the same as those before him, giving up just like that? What kind of background did this Ling Han have, causing every opponent of his to do him favors like that?

Ling Han stepped onto the fourth tournament stage, and he only had three opponents left ahead of him.

Although he had expended a bit of energy battling Baili Teng Yun, he could still fight another battle. Ling Han gave a great leap and arrived on the third tournament stage.

"Congratulations to Brother Ling for overcoming all difficulties to make it this far," Li Dong Yue said to Ling Han before his expression grew serious, and he said, "However, as a sign of my respect for Brother Ling, I will try my best in this battle."

"Please!" Ling Han drew his sword and displayed a sword move in response.

Li Dong Yue gave a long hiss and prepared to use his Little Tianyuan Hands, charging towards Ling Han in attack.

Although he was bare-handed, after learning this martial arts technique, once he began circulating Origin Power, his hands would be like finely forged iron, as firm as rock. Even sharp blades had no hope of causing injury to his hands--or at least the ordinary iron sword Ling Han was wielding had no hope of injuring his hands.

"Ding, ding, ding, ding," as the blade and the flesh of hand

clashed, clanging noises continuously echoed out, and there were fiery sparks flying about from the point of contact between the hand and the blade.

Li Dong Yue was in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so he exceeded both Baili Teng Yun and even Ling Han in prowess. Thus, after exchanging a few blows, Ling Han could actually feel numbness spreading through the hand he wielded his sword in. However, he had already learnt the Body of Dead Tree ability from the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, so this kind of damage did not affect him in the slightest.

Ling Han shook his head. Such a clash of brute force would be non-conclusive unless one of the fighters had a power advantage or both fighters were evenly matched. Even if his body was tough and indomitable due to the Body of Dead Tree skill he had learnt and thus avoided damage from the tremors caused by clashing with Li Dong Yue, it was still absolutely pointless. He used the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts, and his two flashes of Sword Qi continuously danced, instantaneously turning his disadvantageous position back around.

But the name of Li Dong Yue was not famous from his talking big. He had managed to form three flashes of Qi, and as his palms flew in an attack, it was obvious that his power was of a terrifying level. He had lost to Qi Yong Ye and Jin Wuji previously simply because those two were even stronger than he was!

His Little Tianyuan Hands was also a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique, so Ling Han did not possess an advantage in terms of the grade of martial arts technique. In terms of power, he was weaker than Li Dong Yue by a single layer of cultivation level, so faced with Li Dong Yue's full power attacks, Ling Han gradually fell into a disadvantage.

"What's the matter? Technically, Baili Teng Yun should be stronger than Li Dong Yue, right? Ling Han had an easy time against Baili Teng Yun, but why is he having such a tough time

against Li Dong Yue now?"

"Could it be that Baili Teng Yun had not tried his best just now?"

"That's definitely the case. Otherwise, how would the current situation be possible?"

"I really am curious now. What kind of background does this Ling Han have? Why is it that all his previous opponents had deliberately allowed him to win?"

All of the spectators were puzzled and extremely curious.

Meanwhile, Ling Dong Xing was frowning deeply. His son had defeated Baili Teng Yun, so he should have been like an irresistible force, continuing his advance to obtain the third place. Yet why was he in a disadvantage now against the "weaker" Li Dong Yue?

A hint of a smile appeared on the corners of Ling Han's lips. Looks like he would have to increase his abilities.

With a wave of his long sword, four flashes of Sword Qi simultaneously appeared!

"Pu!"

This time, all spectators choked. All of them were completely struck dumb.

Four flashes of Sword Qi, he actually had four flashes of Sword Qi!

One has to understand that possessing four flashes of Sword Qi could be considered as a minor accomplishment. Such a person would deserve the name of a ruler, signifying that he could be invincible among those of a certain cultivation level!

A seventeen-year-old ruler!

Ling Dong Xing was both astonished and elated. He turned to Liu Yu Tong and asked, "Han'er has managed to form four flashes of Sword Qi, did you already know about this?"

"En!" Liu Yu Tong nodded. In truth, Ling Han had already managed to form four flashes of Sword Qi when he had only been in Body Refining Tier. But this guy had not wanted to reveal his true talent and display his full prowess all this while. Thus, every time he revealed a bit more of his power, it was always enough to give a shock.

"Very good!" Ling Dong Xing heavily slapped his thigh, excitement filling his face. "This stupid brat even kept his old man completely in the dark. See if I won't teach him a good lesson when we get back!"

Liu Yu Tong hid a smile. She knew that Ling Dong Xing felt only joy now. How could he bear to reprimand Ling Han.

"No wonder his previous opponents had forfeited. This guy has apparently managed to form four flashes of Sword Qi!"

"He could be named a ruler among those of the same cultivation level already!"

"I had never really imagined that such a genius would actually emerge from within our Da Yuan City!"

"That's true. Among the thirty six cities of Rain Country, the martial arts level of our Da Yuan City has always been below average. But now there actually appeared a genius that has formed four flashes of Sword Qi from within our midst. He is indeed a source of pride for our city!"

When these four flashes of Sword Qi appeared, it generated a shock that spread through the whole area. Even the clash of the titans between the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji had paled in comparison as more and more people were drawn over, fighting to get a look at the indomitable might of four flashes of Sword Qi.

Li Dong Yue's face was full of bitterness. He had worked so hard on his cultivation these three years. Originally, he had thought that he would be able to get the first place in the Da Yuan

Tournament this time. But he never imagined that his dreams would be shattered by the Fourth Prince, causing him to realize that he had fallen behind those in his age range. And now, in a generation younger than his own, there actually appeared a freak that had successfully formed four flashes of Sword Qi, causing his confidence to suffer a severe blow.

However, he immediately pulled himself together. As long as he managed to enroll into Hu Yang Academy, then his prowess would definitely be able to advance by leaps and bounds, and he'd be able to catch up to the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji.

'This person has a close relationship with three Black Grade alchemists. Moreover, he's also managed to form four flashes of Sword Qi. Why don't I readily forfeit, and do him a favor?' Li Dong Yue thought. 'The others have all done him favors, so if I don't, it might not look good.'

When he thought this, he immediately retreated, clasped his hands and said, "Brother Ling is indeed a genius to be able to form four flashes of Sword Qi at the mere age of seventeen! I am really deeply impressed by your achievements! There is no need to continue the battle, I forfeit!"

'Damn!'

All of the spectators were depressed. This was the first time that they had seen a genius with four flashes of Sword Qi, and you actually won't fight for a bit longer, letting them enjoy watching to the fullest... why did you forfeit so soon?

Chapter 74: The Next Battle

Still, Li Dong Yue forfeiting was only to be expected.

After all, there had been many previous fighters who had forfeited even without any obvious signs of impending loss, so everyone was somewhat prepared that this kind of thing would happen again. Additionally, Ling Han could form four flashes of Sword Qi, which granted him invincibility amongst those of the same cultivation level, even if his cultivation level was still a bit low.

"Thank you for the match!" Ling Han said, clasping his hands in a polite gesture. Yet he couldn't help pondering, would all his opponents let him win all the way to the first place?

As the battle between Ling Han and Li Dong Yue's battle had concluded, everyone turned their attention back to the duel between the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji. Both of them were young geniuses who were studying at Hu Yang Academy, so their respective ability was quite even. There wasn't really too big of a gap in power between the two of them.

But when Qi Yong Ye started to use the Son of Heaven Fist Technique, Jin Wuji immediately fell into a disadvantage.

When the Son of Heaven appears, all shall bow!

This was a kind of aura domination, and only a Prince like Qi Yong Ye would be able to cultivate this technique. Even if Jin Wuji learnt the same technique, it would still be useless. He did not possess the royal heritage necessary to tap into its potential.

'Rumor has it that stealing the divine weapon of a nation would allow the manipulation of that nation's power. It would not only speed up the rate of cultivation, but could also be used against one's enemies, increasing your own battle prowess. Looks like the rumors aren't false. Just a mere Prince, and he possesses such

power,' Ling Han nodded to himself.

The power of the nation is an ability that is equivalent to four flashes of Sword Qi. According to the slang of Rain Country, this would be the standard of a ruler.

If the Da Yuan King were to use this fist technique, he'd probably be able to reach approximately the level of seven flashes of Qi since he is a real noble lord. For the true ruler of the nation.... he'd probably have the power equivalent to ten flashes of Qi, at the level of completion.

However, Qi is only the first step in martial arts. One still has to go through 'Ray' before being able to reach the highest level, 'Heart'. Thus, cultivation ultimately still depends on the effort of the individual martial artist,' Ling Han thought, yet he had to admit--to be able to manipulate and make use of the power of a nation at the low level of Element Gathering Tier and increase his individual battle prowess to a new level was already impressive enough a feat, even if it was just the tiniest part.

'Based on Qi Yong Ye's current ability, he is practically half a foot into Gushing Spring Tier. Perhaps my little female attendant would be no match for him either. After all, she has just formed the second flash of Sword Qi, so she still has no way to rival the might of a ruler that he possesses.

If it was me, I'd definitely need to use Lone Wolf's Blood to upgrade my power to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Otherwise, I would need to depend on the self-recovery ability of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll and slowly wear him down. With the Body of Dead Tree ability that I have now, my defenses are not something that a martial artist in Element Gathering Tier can break through!

I had better stick to using Lone Wolf's Blood. Indestructible Heaven Scroll is my real trump card. I should avoid using it if I can.'

While he had been thinking pensively, the battle between Qi Yong Ye and Jin Wuji was nearing its conclusion. The Son of Heaven Fist Technique granted Qi Yong Ye the battle prowess of a ruler and allowed him to completely dominate Jin Wuji. As long as Jin Wuji himself had not yet formed four flashes of Qi, he couldn't possibly be a match for Qi Yong Ye.

There's nothing to be done. Qi Yong Ye had the advantage of a good, noble background, and this was something even Liu Yu Tong could not compare to.

"Peng!"

By the time Qi Yong Ye threw his eleventh punch, Jin Wuji could no longer resist and was directly flung away. With an "Ao~", he spat out four consecutive mouthfuls of blood, half-kneeling on the floor, no longer able to continue the battle.

"I have lost!" Jin Wuji declared with slight reluctance. Strictly speaking, he had not lost because he was weaker, or because he was less talented. Instead, he had lost because his opponent had a better background than him. How could he not become depressed at this reality?

"Thank you for the match!" Qi Yong Ye clasped his hands politely in response. Although his victory was due to the Son of Heaven Fist Technique, it could have been possible only if he had learned it successfully. There were so many princes and imperial princes in Rain Country, but how many had actually successfully learned the technique?

The name of genius, he bore it without guilt.

However, when the two of them saw that Ling Han had actually arrived on the third tournament stage, they could not help being shocked. Previously, they had been too absorbed in their own battle, and so had not seen Ling Han's fight with Baili Teng Yun and Li Dong Yue. Naturally, they had no idea that Ling Han was powerful to this extent, or even of the fact that he had formed four

flashes of Sword Qi.

The other Stage Masters had wanted to continue watching the match, but since the duel between the two greatest young rulers had concluded, they began to issue their own challenges to aim for a better placement. Doing favors for Ling Han was one thing, but if they could manage to get a better rank, who wouldn't want to try?

Ling Han waited quietly. After half an hour, he would challenge Jin Wuji.

Currently, the space in his Dantian was still too small, and with the high-powered rotation of the Five Elements Origin Nuclei, his reserves of Origin Power got expended too quickly. After a fierce battle, he had to take alchemical pills to assist his recovery, thus this half an hour's time was also very important to him.

Very soon, half an hour had passed and Ling Han leaped onto the second tournament stage to challenge this martial artist that was ranked second in this tournament.

This fell into the expectations of all the spectators and they all stared with their eyes open wide, unwilling to miss a single moment. After all, this was the first genius in the whole of Da Yuan City who has managed to form four flashes of Qi.

Jin Wuji had a slightly awkward expression on his face. A few days ago, he was tricked by Ling Han, leading to his public embarrassment. But when he recalled that there were three Black Grade alchemists behind Ling Han, even if he did not abandon the thoughts of revenge, most likely those seniors of his in the Jin Clan would force him to give up such a foolish venture anyway.

After all, the very worst group of people you could offend in this world would be alchemists.

However, such a great humiliation, how could he simply let it go just like that?

'Very well, you were the one who challenged me, so I can take

advantage of this opportunity to teach you a lesson! As long as I don't deal you any permanent injury, no one will be able to say anything! This is, after all, a martial arts tournament!' Jin Wuji thought, his gaze immediately turning sharp.

"Brother Ling, please offer your guidance!" He clapped his palms together and his two hands immediately dazzled brightly like gold. This was Jin Yang Palms, a Yellow Grade high level martial arts technique.

Ling Han waved his sword in a sword move, and said, "Please!"

"Whoosh," Jin Wuji immediately began a powerful offense. As his palms flew in attack, a resplendent light shone.

Ling Han gave a wave of his sword, and four flashes of Sword Qi immediately appeared. Since he had already revealed his abilities, then he naturally had no intention to hide his prowess any longer.

"What, four flashes of Sword Qi!?" Jin Wuji exclaimed in astonishment, his face twitching involuntarily in his shock.

Four flashes of Sword Qi, that was a ruler of those in the same cultivation level! Even in the imperial city, there were only a rare few who have reached the extraordinary height of possessing four flashes of Qi, and all of them were the absolute powerhouses of the older generation! How could Jin Wuji not be extremely shocked?

But he immediately realized that though there were some that were gasping and exclaiming in admiration, and some who were waving their arms and tripping over their feet in excitement, there wasn't a single expression of surprise amongst the spectators.

Hey, hey, hey. This was four flashes of Sword Qi, do you guys not see this?

Could it be that it was him who had seen wrongly?

Jin Wuji could not help the doubts rising in his heart. After all, just how rare was achieving four flashes of Sword Qi? Even if it had appeared in the imperial city, it would be enough to create a

giant commotion. Yet the people here actually appeared so calm... of course he would be confused.

...Naturally, he had no idea that these spectators had already experienced the same shock as he just now, so of course, there would be no such scenes as people watching wide-eyed and flabbergasted, gaping in shock and wonder.

Thankfully, there was one person who "gave him face" and revealed an extremely shocked expression--and that, of course, was none other than Qi Yong Ye.

His mouth was partially open in shock, gaping at Ling Han with a completely dumbfounded expression, a faint twitch at the corners of his lips.

After Jin Wuji recovered from his shock, he still persisted in his attack. So what if Ling Han had four flashes of Sword Qi? Ling Han's cultivation level was still too low after all. He would definitely not forfeit just because he had been surprised by the revelation of Ling Han's four flashes of Sword Qi.

The two fighters were soon engaged in a fierce battle.

Chapter 75: Battle for the Top

Jin Wuji possessed the typical power of someone at the peak period of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and Yellow Grade high level martial arts techniques were also the most powerful techniques that could be learnt within this cultivation level. Moreover, he had also formed two flashes of Qi, so among martial artists of Element Gathering Tier, he was someone that was definitely close to the rank of ruler.

Unfortunately, his opponent was Ling Han!

Four flashes of Sword Qi equated being a ruler of his cultivation level.

Jin Wuji felt as if he was facing Qi Yong Ye again. The only difference was that Qi Yong Ye was stronger in terms of power; in other areas, Ling Han was not inferior in any way to Qi Yong Ye. In fact, in terms of reaction speed and ability, he was even better than Qi Yong Ye.

Was this really a seventeen-year-old young man?

Talent was indeed a terrifying thing!

It wasn't until this moment that Jin Wuji finally abandoned all thoughts of vengeance. He even decided to pay a visit to Ling Han with his younger brother in tow to apologize, and dissolve the bad feelings between them once and for all.

It was because Ling Han would definitely have horrifyingly high achievements in the future, and it was practically guaranteed that he would become someone that exceeded Jin Wuji. Since there was no way he could eliminate this kind of rival, then the best idea was to develop an affable relationship with the former. He could definitely not afford to make an enemy of someone of his caliber.

The battle continued on and on. This time, aside from using Lone Wolf's Blood and Indestructible Heaven Scroll, Ling Han had used

all the abilities he had on hand, allowing him to enjoy the battle to the fullest. Unfortunately, the Five Elements Origin Nuclei expended Origin Power at a very rapid pace, which would not allow him to persist for too long.

....It'd be great if he managed to obtain the Dark Moon Grass. It would help to expand the space in his Dantian by many times.

After battling for more than a hundred moves, the two of them still maintained a very evenly matched balance.

Jin Wuji could not help thinking, 'There are three Black Grade alchemists behind this guy, and anyways, I won't be...' similarly with those before him, he chose to deliberately throw the match and do a favor for Ling Han. This way, when he brought his brother to pay Ling Han a visit and apologize, it'd probably be easier to dissolve the remaining bad feelings between them.

"Brother Ling is indeed brilliant in martial arts. I forfeit!" He swiftly retreated backwards, clasped his hands together and declared his forfeit.

Ling Han's later momentum was already a bit lacking, and he was about to start circulating Lone Wolf's Blood to defeat his opponent instantaneously. He had never imagined that Jin Wuji would actually forfeit of his own volition. Seeing the friendly signal issued by his opponent, he nodded in response and said, "Thank you for the match."

Anyone can make mistakes, so it'd be wise to forgive them if it was possible. Moreover, in the first place, the conflict between himself and Jin Wuji wasn't an irresolvable feud that could not be forgiven.

"Sure enough, another forfeit."

"Could it be that among the martial arts techniques that Ling Han has learned there is one specifically geared to make his opponent forfeit?"

"Hahahaha, if you were as talented as Ling Han and have also formed four flashes of Sword Qi, I could also declare forfeit in front of you."

"Pei, how could four flashes of Sword Qi be so easily formed?"

The spectators felt both astonished--because Ling Han actually advanced another step further--and numbed as they thought that this was only a natural course of events. After all, this scene had already played many times.

Thankfully, Ling Han only had one last opponent remaining, and even if Qi Yong Ye forfeited too, they only needed to experience a shock one last time.

"Good!" Ling Dong Xing gripped his hands into tight fists, slightly numb with excitement. His son was able to achieve such a feat, what else could he ask for? He recalled that when his son had declared that he would obtain the first place in the tournament two months ago, he felt absolutely incredulous. But what about now?

The first place was so close at hand!

Even if he knew that Qi Yong Ye was very powerful and the Son of Heaven Fist Technique was equivalent to four flashes of Sword Qi as well as that his cultivation level was far above Ling Han's own, he still could not help the wild hope bursting to life within him.

What if his son really managed to do the impossible?

First place!

Since he had already come so far, then he should definitely aim for the first place. If he didn't even issue a challenge, he would definitely regret it for the rest of his life.

The other Stage Masters were all engaged in battle, but there were already few spectators who were still watching these battles. Everyone was waiting with baited breath for Ling Han to recover

and the last battle to take place.

Was it Ling Han who would be able to create another miracle, and become the greatest dark horse in this Da Yuan Tournament? Or would it be the Fourth Prince that would have the last laugh, completely leaving behind the title of second place?

Ling Han had more than enough time to rest and recover as there was no rule that specified that he had to issue a challenge after resting for half an hour.

He would, of course, recover to his best condition before proceeding to challenge Qi Yong Ye.

Although even after a long time, Ling Han did not make any move to issue a challenge, none of the spectators rushed him into doing so for they knew very well that only if Ling Han managed to recover to his best condition could he and the Fourth Prince offer the most wonderful, brilliant battle.

After another hour passed, Ling Han finally stood.

'Here it comes! Here it comes!'

All of the spectators thought, immediately growing excited.

"Fourth Prince, let us battle!" Ling Han jumped up onto the first tournament stage and issued a challenge to Qi Yong Ye.

"Brother Ling, please!" Qi Yong Ye smiled, though he felt an urge to start cursing.

After all, all the people before him had thrown their matches because there were three Black Grade alchemists standing behind Ling Han... should he throw his match or not?

If he threw the match, then what? The first place of this Da Yuan Tournament was something that he had coveted for three years and the Dark Moon Grass could help him to immediately step into Gushing Spring Tier, which would save him two or three years' time of cultivation at the very least.

But if he didn't, then what? The others have all thrown their matches, and you don't... wasn't this not giving face to Ling Han?

It'd be fine if it was anyone else, but Qi Yong Ye had a grand ambition. He was someone who would become a famous lord, and a famous lord definitely should respect the wise and recruit talents from everywhere and anywhere. Especially with a genius like Ling Han, to enter a conflict with him was naturally something very bad.

So how could Qi Yong Ye not be stuck in a dilemma?

Finally, Qi Yong Ye still decided to do his best. If worst comes to worst, after he had commissioned the concoction of alchemical pills from the Dark Moon Grass, he'd give one to Ling Han.

"Please!" Ling Han waved his sword, and four flashes of Sword Qi appeared.

Qi Yong Ye gave a loud shout and already started using the Son of Heaven Fist Technique. His movements were very large, as if a single punch would be able to shatter everything--even if it was a mountain that appeared in his way. What was even more terrifying was the fact that there were actually three layers of Qi wrapped around his fists!

Although the power of the nation could not simply be added onto it in a sum, but no matter how it was, its strength was still equivalent to four flashes of Sword Qi.

All of the spectators gasped in shock. So it turned out that Qi Yong Ye had not displayed his full abilities previously, and this was the true extent of the Fourth Prince's power!

So powerful, how could Ling Han win against this? Even if his opponent was someone close to Gushing Spring Tier and had not yet formed Qi, he wouldn't be able to match Qi Yong Ye either.

"Peng! Peng! Peng!"

After repeated blows from heavy fists, Ling Han fell into a

continuous retreat. However, even if he withstood this kind of attack, there was absolutely no harm done to his body.

Body of Dead Tree!

Ling Han was a bit stunned. If he didn't start bleeding, how was he supposed to circulate Lone Wolf's Blood? He was about to faint. So it turned out that defenses that were too strong might not necessarily be a good thing as it actually conflicted directly with him using Lone Wolf's Blood.

He shouted loudly, and bit down on his tongue harshly. Immediately, a bitter taste flooded the inside of his mouth. He had finally started bleeding.

"Hong," the four Five Elements Origin Nuclei in his body immediately began rotating even faster, suddenly allowing his power to be raised to a new level.

Ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier!

The higher the cultivation level, the smaller the power upgrade from Lone Wolf's Blood; however, this was already enough.

Ling Han brandished his iron sword, using the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts to its full extent.

"Ding, ding, ding, ding... peng, peng, peng, peng," the two fighters were embroiled in a fierce clash as they displayed their respective prowess as much as they liked.

"Gods, so it turns out that Element Gathering Tier could actually be this powerful!"

"I'm also in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, but if I were the one fighting, I'd probably be defeated within three moves."

"If you constantly compare yourself to others, you will only make yourself angry. A new generation is soon going to replace the old generation."

"We're all old already. This era belongs to the young generation."

Quite a number of the Clan Heads from Gray Cloud Town were sighing tiredly. Some of them were thirty years old, forty years old, or even fifty years old, and they were all stuck on the cultivation level of ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. Because they could not manage to break through even after a very long time, they improved their own Origin Power to its limits with constant practice, but when facing these two young talents, they could only sigh at their own inferiority.

Chapter 76: First Place!

Qi Yong Ye was overwhelmed with shock. Initially, he had thought that he could disregard all the so-called geniuses in this Da Yuan Tournament. Even if he didn't do his best, he'd still be able to easily get the first place. Things had gone according to his plan--at least they had until he encountered the dark horse named Ling Han.

Too strong!

This time, he had really tried his best, yet there still was no sign of him having the upper hand. How could he not be extremely astonished at this?

Ling Han was only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and he was already powerful to this extent... then when he reached the seventh layer and officially stepped into the late stage of Element Gathering Tier, how powerful would he get?!

He couldn't be called a genius anymore! He was a monster!

'Even Feng Yan hadn't been as powerful as this three years ago, right?' Qi Yong Ye involuntarily thought.

In the younger generation of Da Yuan City, Qi Yong Ye was not the most talented one! That honor belonged to Feng Yan! Three years ago, Feng Yan, with a cultivation level of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, ascended to the first place with an absolute dominance over Qi Yong Ye!

And in the tournament before that, Feng Yan, with a cultivation level of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, managed to defeat many opponents in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier to obtain the first place.

Even after entering Hu Yang Academy, where geniuses of all kinds and varieties were gathered, the brilliance of Feng Yan did not decrease in the slightest. Last year, he had already broken

through to Gushing Spring Tier and won a place among the top ten strongest elites of the academy. Qi Yong Ye could only manage to admire and look up to this level of achievement.

Now, Qi Yong Ye finally managed to see another monster who could match Feng Yan, or was perhaps even more talented than the latter was!

Because, when Feng Yan had been in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, those of his opponents who were in the ninth layer were nowhere as strong as Qi Yong Ye was currently.

As he fiercely battled, Qi Yong Ye thought that since Ling Han was so monstrously talented, he might as well help the latter establish a grand reputation and allow him to enter Hu Yang Academy with a glory that did not pale in comparison with Feng Yan.

And by then, Feng Yan would definitely feel pressure, wouldn't he?

Fine, then he will give face to Ling Han and do him a favor!

...Of course, if it wasn't for the fact that Ling Han was powerful enough, Qi Yong Ye would definitely not deign to do this favor for Ling Han. But since Ling Han has now displayed power strong enough to match him, he'd be happy to do him this favor at such little cost to himself.

After all, there was no idea what kind of heights this monster would reach in the future; he also had three Black Grade alchemists as his support, so it wasn't a far-off dream for him to surpass Feng Yan in power.

This was a character deserving of his "investment".

This kind of stake, he was willing to gamble on it!

"Haha, Brother Ling is indeed exceptional. I forfeit this battle!" Qi Yong Ye forfeited of his own volition.

Ling Han gave a short laugh, and said, "This battle could only be considered a draw." His strengths were the Body of Dead Tree ability, defenses, and a terrifyingly rapid recovery speed, while his weakness lay in the fact that the Five Element Origin Nuclei exhausted his reserves of Origin Power too quickly.

Thus, he truly could not say for sure that he could defeat Qi Yong Ye, thus a draw was the fairest judgment of their battle.

Qi Yong Ye gave a shake of his head and said, "You're only in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and you're already able to match me! If I still insist on saying this was a draw, then my skin is really too thick!" After speaking, he leaped onto the second tournament stage voluntarily.

Ling Han had reached the top!

Hua, a clamor of shocked gasps and exclamations could be heard downstage.

Although such a conclusion was not really that unpredictable, when they actually heard the Fourth Prince declare his own forfeit, there was still quite a number of spectators who felt that it was all unreal.

Six years ago, the most talented genius in Da Yuan City of the time had overcome all the difficulties in his way and courageously won the first place in the tournament with a mere cultivation level of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and now, six years later, a similar giant dark horse once again appeared!

Was the field of martial arts in Da Yuan City starting to flourish?

Ling Han made no pretense of modesty, because he truly did need the prize rewarded to the first place winner of this tournament. Thus, he only raised his clasped hands in Qi Yong Ye's direction, signifying that he would remember this favor, which he would repay tenfold in the future.

At this point, there was only about half an hour left before

sunset, and there remained only one tournament stage that was still battling. If the Stage Master won, then the heavy curtain would finally be drawn on this Da Yuan Tournament. If he did not, then there would have to be a bit more waiting before the end.

However, there were no more surprises. Half an hour later, the rankings of the top ten strongest was finally confirmed.

First place, Ling Han!

"He really got the first place! He really got the first place!" Ling Dong Xing kept mumbling. Excitement and disbelief were all over his face.

His son, once a publicly acknowledged trash, actually would have the day when he would become the first place winner in the Da Yuan Tournament!

He finally let out a bout of uncontrollable laughter, overwhelmed with joy.

The top ten martial artists all descended from their respective tournament stages. After this, there would be a banquet held at the Royal House of the Da Yuan King to celebrate the success of the top fifty participants.

"Congratulations, Brother Ling!"

"Congratulations!"

Qi Yong Ye and the others all gathered around Ling Han to offer their congratulations.

"Thank you! Thank you!" Ling Han clasped his hands politely in response.

"Haha, later we definitely have to get ourselves thoroughly drunk!"

"But of course!"

"Let's go, let's go!"

Only the top fifty participants could attend the banquet. Their friends and family were not allowed to accompany them, so whether it was Ling Dong Xing or Liu Yu Tong, neither could accompany Ling Han to the banquet.

Very soon, Ling Han and the others arrived at the Royal House of the Da Yuan King. This was a colossal residence, at least ten times bigger than the residence of the Fourth Prince. The embellishments and decorations within were all extremely extravagant and luxurious, causing quite a few young men who had come from some smaller towns to look around with gaping mouths, as if they were village boys who had managed to enter the imperial palace.

The host of this banquet was the Da Yuan King, and later on, he would be directly presenting the top ten with their respective prizes.

However, the Da Yuan King did not stay for too long. He was a powerful warrior of Spiritual Ocean Tier, so he needed not put on any airs at all. He only needed to take a seat and he would naturally exude a terrifying aura, causing all the others to feel a kind of pressure.

After he left, the atmosphere finally became lively. All of them were young people, so very quickly, they found similar topics of conversation. Soon, they would all be heading to Hu Yang Academy, so naturally they all wanted to make more friends. That way, they would be able to look after each other at the academy.

However, Ling Han was a bit agitated. He was waiting very impatiently for the presentation of the Dark Moon Grass, a treasure that even powerful warriors of Heaven Tier would feel envy over. As long as it had not entered his pocket yet, there was no way for him to set his mind at ease.

When he thought about it, it was actually quite funny for him to become this impatient with his temperament.

After waiting for two hours, this banquet finally ended, and the prizes for the top ten were all presented to their winners, contained in small boxes. Ling Han opened his box and took a look. Inside lay a herb that was about a foot long. Each of the leaves were crescent-shaped, and their color resembled darkened moonlight.

It was indeed the Dark Moon Grass!

Ling Han let out a breath in relief. He was just about to take his leave, but Qi Yong Ye and the others all came over to make small talk with him, so he couldn't leave just yet. It wasn't until about midnight that the guests finally departed, and Ling Han could finally return to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion.

The first thing he did was begin preparation to concoct an alchemical pill.

Although the Spatial Pill was something that even powerful warriors of Heaven Tier would feel envious over, it could still be taken by martial artists of Element Gathering Tier, so strictly speaking, it was only a Yellow Grade mid level alchemical pill. Ling Han of course was able to concoct it.

He had already long since prepared all the other ingredients necessary. The only thing missing was the main ingredient, Dark Moon Grass. Since everything was ready now, he immediately began to concoct the pill.

Now that he was in Element Gathering Tier, concoction of a Yellow Grade mid level alchemical pill was naturally a piece of cake. After only half an hour, he had successfully concocted the Spatial Pill.

Unfortunately, there was only one.

Without any hesitation, he immediately swallowed the Spatial Pill. He promptly sat down and waited quietly for the pill to take effect.

"Hong," very quickly, there occurred a tremendous change

within his body. It was as if his Dantian had become an ocean where raging waves were surging; each time the waves crashed, the space within his Dantian would enlarge by a little bit.

Chapter 77: A Hundred Times

One time, two times, three times. The space within Ling Han's Dantian continuously enlarged at a shockingly rapid pace.

He felt as if his body was about to burst, but in truth, the Dantian was a small world. Even if it became larger than this whole planet, no physical changes would appear on him.

Ling Han, with the help of the medicinal effects from the Spatial Pill, stimulated the continued expansion of his Dantian. At this point, every bit of increase could only be beneficial.

Ten times, twenty times, thirty times!

Ling Han was overwhelmed with astonishment and joy, for there was still a large amount of medicinal effects that had not yet been expended. So to what extent would this allow his Dantian to expand?

But when he thought longer about it, this was only normal. This was an alchemical pill that would cause even powerful warriors of Heaven Tier to be moved, and now it was actually taken by him, a lowly martial artist of Element Gathering Tier, so how awesome would the effects be! Unfortunately, the people now actually don't recognize the kind of priceless treasure that was the Dark Moon Grass, and extravagantly use it to break through to Gushing Spring Tier. What a waste!

Unfortunately, a martial artist could only take a single Spatial Pill once in his lifetime. If he took another, there would be no effects at all. If it had not been for this, Ling Han believed he would be able to get his hands on more Dark Moon Grass. However, on the other hand, for most people, the Spatial Pill was not very valuable because rarely would they battle until the point that their Origin Power was completely exhausted.

...The increase of space within the Dantian only improved the

martial artist's ability to battle longer. There was no change in the amount of power behind each attack.

But for a minority of geniuses, this was an extremely valuable item, as they would often battle until the point where they had no way out. So the larger the space within their Dantian, the longer they would be able to continue battling, and on many occasions, this would be a life-saver for them.

Ling Han was of course even more pleased. He possessed the Five Element Origin Nuclei, and previously, the space within his Dantian was really too tiny. There was completely too little Origin Power for his use!

Eighty times, ninety times, one hundred times, and finally, all the medicinal effects of the Spatial Pill were exhausted. Ling Han finally opened his eyes.

Expanded by a hundred times!

If this Spatial Pill was swallowed by a powerful warrior of Heaven Tier, the space within the Dantian would only expand by one percent. However, even this single percent would be larger by one hundred times than his own expansion of a hundred times!

There was absolutely no comparison between the two.

It was not because the Spatial Pill was not awesome enough, but because his current cultivation level was really too low. However, with every future increase in his cultivation level, the degree of expansion of the space within his Dantian would also be much higher than others, though it would become gradually less and less, until the point where it would only be an expansion by one percent when he reached Heaven Tier.

As a result, there was no loss in him taking the pill so early on. Instead, the earlier he took it, the earlier he could make use of it. The benefits of the Spatial Pill could last from Element Gathering Tier all the way to Heaven Tier, or even until Shattering Void Tier

in future.

He did not immediately stand up. Instead, he stimulated the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus to continuously absorb Spiritual Qi, which would be transformed into his own Origin Power within his Dantian, building up his reserves.

Though the space within his Dantian was now extremely large, the Five Elements Mix Chaos Lotus was too mighty, and together with the Five Elements Heaven Grade Skill, absorbing and refining Spiritual Qi was done at an excessively rapid pace. Only one night had passed, yet he had managed to fill the colossal space within his Dantian completely.

This also meant that in the future, if he battled to the point of exhaustion, he would require at least one night to recover to his prime condition if he did not take any alchemical pills to accelerate his recovery.

Although he had not slept at all the night before, Ling Han still felt very energetic. After reaching Element Gathering Tier, cultivation would be able to replace sleep to a limited extent. Moreover, he had only stayed awake for a single night, so it really wasn't a big deal.

"Han'er, when do you plan to return to Gray Cloud Town?" Ling Dong Xing asked him when he arrived at the external rooms to eat.

Ling Han considered for a moment, and said, "There is quite a number of people who have asked me to share a meal with them, and I can't really make excuses, so maybe after another three or four days."

"Very well, then you stay here for a few more days while I return first and prepare a celebratory feast for you!" Ling Dong Xing said, filled with excitement. He couldn't wait to let all the townspeople know that Ling Han had won the first place in this Da Yuan Tournament.

"All right, take care on your journey, Father," Ling Han said with a smile.

Ling Dong Xing nodded. He did not worry about Ling Han, because his son's prowess was already above his own, so even if he stayed behind, he couldn't protect Ling Han anyways. Moreover, he was still the Clan Head, and after being absent for so long, he had to return as soon as possible to take charge of things back home.

After breakfast, Ling Dong Xing set out to return to Gray Cloud Town while Ling Han was dragged off by Qi Yong Ye and the others to enjoy a meal here and have fun there. Because these people had all thrown their matches appropriately for him in the tournament, this was a favor, so Ling Han naturally could not be ungrateful.

On the second day, Qi Yong Ye invited Ling Han to have fun at the Wrestling Ring.

What was so fun about the Wrestling Ring?

Ling Han didn't understand, but could not resist Qi Yong Ye's enthusiasm and so was dragged along by the latter there. It was also the place where the Da Yuan Tournament had been held a few days ago. At this moment, all the tournament stages had been dismantled, and there was only a single battle ongoing in such a wide area. Five wrestlers were currently being surrounded in an attack by thirteen demonic beasts. The battle was fierce and the scene was bloody, whereas the spectators that were watching kept releasing shouts of excitement.

"They are all prisoners awaiting their execution. Though the battles here are extremely dangerous, if they manage to win ten times in a row, they would be pardoned and regain their freedom," Qi Yong Ye explained.

Ling Han nodded. Majority of empires had this kind of system. After prisoners were sentenced to death, they could choose to enter

a battle to the death in the Wrestling Ring and win for themselves the chance to continue living. Of course, majority of them died in their battles. The number of people who managed to win their own freedom could be counted on the fingers of a single hand.

"Good!" All of the spectators shouted suddenly, because one of the prisoners had made a mistake and three demonic beasts had worked together and ripped off his arms. The agony caused him to continuously scream in pain, but his screams did not last too long, because soon after, his throat was torn out and his flesh was divided amongst the starving demonic beasts.

The spectators here have all come for this kind of death and this kind of bloody scenes. Seeing such a scene, some crazy woman even tore apart her shirt and shrieked in excitement, her breasts exposed and trembling in her emotional high.

The remaining four did not show any sign of panic. Obviously, they have experienced such a thing many times, so they continued to rely on each other and only concentrated on the enemies right in front of them.

"Gambling is allowed here. Is Brother Ling interested?" Qi Yong Ye turned to him and asked.

Ling Han shook his head in refusal. He had never had a liking for this kind of thing that used the lives of others for entertainment purposes.

"So Brother Ling does not like this kind of battles. To be honest, neither do I. But the battle after this would definitely be very exciting," Qi Yong Ye said mysteriously. "An elite of Gushing Spring Tier who's a rapist. Who knows how many women have been ruined by his hand? But he is indeed very powerful; he has not died no matter what was done to him. Today, it would be his thousandth battle, and if he wins it, that'd be a thousand wins for him. If he wins again, there would be no choice but to set him free."

A prisoner of Body Refining Tier would be set free after winning ten times in a row. For Element Gathering Tier, the condition was a hundred wins, while for Gushing Spring Tier, the condition was a thousand wins.

A spark of killing intent involuntarily flashed through Ling Han's eyes. Out of the types of people he hated the most, depraved lechers were in the top three. Such scum should be directly killed without hesitation. There was no need to give them any sliver of a chance.

"Today, many of the spectators have come to watch this depraved lecher receive his just punishment!" Qi Yong Ye said, "And for this reason, our Royal House of the Da Yuan King has even assigned an elite to battle with him. There is absolutely no way we would allow him to avoid getting his just deserts!"

While they had been speaking, the battle had neared its conclusion. Surrounded and attacked by more than ten demonic beasts, after seven demonic beasts died, the four prisoners were mauled to death by the remaining beasts one by one, causing the spectators watching to cheer.

"Everyone, before the climax event on our agenda today, we would like to invite all of you to enjoy a little program!" A host entered into the ring, raised his hand and two iron fences on either side of the ring were raised. From behind both iron fences, an iron cage was respectively pushed out. One of the cages contained an extremely strong-looking mature wild wolf, while the other cage actually contained a little girl that could only be five or six years old at most!

Ling Han suddenly stood, flames of rage bursting into life within him.

Chapter 78: Wild Girl

"Everyone, a team of martial artists entered the Seven Wind Mountains on a hunt a few days ago, and in the den of a fierce tiger, discovered this little girl. The strangest thing was, this little girl not only was not devoured by the fierce tiger, but had even been living with it for quite a few years. She should have been abandoned as an infant in the wild, and was brought back by the tiger to its den," the host introduced the little girl's background, pointing at her.

"She might look small, but she is exceptionally strong. She's also very violent, does not know how to speak, and nor does she know how to walk on two legs. Her behavior is every bit like that of a wild beast. And now, let us all watch her performance in a battle with this wild wolf!"

All the spectators turned their attention to the little girl. The girl had a head of unkempt hair and her whole body was filthy, covered with dust and dirt. Overall, she had a very bedraggled appearance and a very thin figure. Compared against that wild wolf... it was practically like comparing an infant with an adult.

How was she supposed to battle against an opponent like that? The only end result would be being killed without mercy.

"Heng!" Qi Yong Ye had also risen to his feet, a displeased expression on his face. This was too much... to actually use such a small child to entertain the audience! They were completely without any conscience!

"Xiu," Ling Han jumped into the Wrestling Ring, and said, "Release this child!"

"Hey, hey, hey. Don't you know the rules? This is the property of the Da Yuan King, how dare you come here to make trouble?" The host was at first stunned, before becoming extremely angry. But soon after, he was again stunned, and pointing at Ling Han, he

exclaimed, "Yi, you're the champion of this year's Da Yuan Tournament!"

After he managed to recognize Ling Han, he dared not be too rash and explained, "Young Master Ling, this is the rule of the Wrestling Ring. Those who enter the Wrestling Ring can only battle. There is no difference between male or female, old or young!"

"Then let me ask you, has she willingly entered the battles in the Wrestling Ring? Or, what crime has she committed that she has no choice but to battle?" Ling Han asked.

"This..." the host was instantly lost for words.

In this world where only the strong would be respected, a "wild girl" would of course not engender anyone's attention. So what if she was sent to battle in the Wrestling Ring, who would care? Who would mind?

With this question from Ling Han, the host had no idea how he was supposed to answer.

"Set her free!" Qi Yong Ye had also leaped into the ring, and coldly commanded the host.

"Yes, Fourth Prince!" The host hurriedly assented. This was a man who may very possibly inherit the position of the Da Yuan King. Naturally, no one would dare to disregard the words of Qi Yong Ye.

Of course, he dared not release any prisoners even if it was the command of the Fourth Prince. However, even if she was released, this wild girl would at most not have any identification papers, and could be taken by anyone as a slave. Even if she was released, it wasn't a big deal.

He ordered for the cage to be unlocked, and the little girl immediately pounced out like a cheetah. She was extremely strong, and the impact from her pouncing actually knocked down

one of the workers in Body Refining Tier. She had completely taken herself to be a wild beast. Her small mouth opened, revealing two pairs of eerie, snow white teeth, aiming a bite at that man's throat.

This was completely the attack style of a fierce tiger, biting down on the throat to cut off the air supply of its prey!

Ling Han quickly acted. He took hold of the little girl's neck, but the little girl instantly swiped her claws at Ling Han without any hesitation. "Chi la", his sleeve was ripped open, a white mark left on Ling Han's forearm.

However, he had already learned the Body of Dead Tree ability, so while the wild girl's claws were sharp, they only managed to leave behind a few white marks on his arm.

"Hu!" The wild girl bared her white teeth at Ling Han, as if she was a fierce beast caught in a trap, looking very irritable.

Ling Han looked slightly surprised, because he was in the Element Gathering Tier and possessed extremely powerful strength. Yet if he had not gripped tightly enough and held on, this wild little girl may have successfully struggled free from his grasp.

But this wild little girl was only five or six years old, so she definitely should not have awakened her Spirit Base yet. How then was it possible that she possessed such powerful strength?

Out of curiosity, Ling Han used his consciousness to scan over her, and discovered there was actually Origin Power in the blood and flesh of the little girl. Unexpectedly, she really was a martial artist, and was in about the third layer of Body Refining Tier.

How was this possible?

After a martial artist had awakened their Spirit Base, he could, with a cultivation technique, begin cultivation, absorbing Spiritual Qi and transforming it into Origin power to refine his own blood, flesh, and bones--this was the Body Refining Tier.

Each martial artist cultivated with a cultivation technique, so naturally there would be signs of the circulation paths of his Origin Power left behind on the martial artist's body in accordance with the cultivation technique he was practicing. That was why a martial artist with a higher cultivation level was able to identify his opponent's cultivation level based on his circulation paths. That was also why no one had discovered that this wild little girl had the ability of the third layer of Body Refining Tier--because there was no sign that she had cultivated before.

Ling Han was different. He still possessed a sliver of the consciousness of Heaven Tier, and so managed to see through to the girl's essence.

Could this little girl actually have a special constitution?

But he had only heard of special constitutions being able to improve the owner's battle prowess, and had never heard that there was a special constitution that would aid the owner's cultivation. But if this little girl was not the descendant of those powerful races, then why had the fierce tiger adopted her? Moreover, she managed to form her own Origin Power without practicing any kind of cultivation technique. This was illogical no matter what, and the only explanation was that she had some kind of special constitution.

True, there were so many different kinds of special constitutions in this world, how could he manage to comprehend all of them?

Ling Han's expression remained unchanged. He turned and said to Qi Yong Ye, "I'll bring this little girl back first and give her a good cleaning."

"Yi, you're not going to watch the upcoming battle?" Qi Yong Ye asked strangely. The battle of a martial artist in Gushing Spring Tier did not come around everyday, and to those at the peak of Element Gathering Tier, watching this kind of battle would somewhat help them in their attempt to break through to Gushing

Spring Tier.

"No," Ling Han shook his head. For him, comprehension of the different tiers was something that he had absolutely no need of.

He brought the wild little girl back to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. The girl was extremely violent. She kept trying to find chances to bite him or scratch him, so Ling Han did not dare to be too careless. After all, the little girl's teeth were really powerful--if bitten, even he would feel a little pain.

One has to know that he has already learned the Body of Dead Tree ability. Any ordinary attack not only would not be able to injure him, he wouldn't feel any bit of pain from it.

He had possibly picked up a valuable treasure.

Ling Han brought the little girl back to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion. Liu Yu Tong had not gone with him as she had been making the final bit of accumulation, preparing to break through to Gushing Spring Tier. She had just walked out and seeing the dirty little child hanging from his hand, she could not help but be surprised.

"It's good that you're here. Give this little girl a bath while I go out and buy her some clothing," Ling Han threw the wild little girl to her. "But you have to be careful, this little girl is quite strong, and has very sharp teeth. If you're bitten, you'll definitely bleed."

Liu Yu Tong's face was filled with shock. She was in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier and long past Body Refining Tier, so all the muscles in her body have been refined and became extremely tough. Only sharp weapons should be able to injure her, but now a little girl's bite could actually cause her to bleed too?

But Ling Han was definitely not the type to speak nonsense, so she still very carefully took hold of the wild little girl.

Ling Han went out and bought some children's clothing; by the time he returned, the wild little girl had completely changed. She

was now like a lotus flower emerging from clear water, definitely a beauty in the bud. But the little girl was currently completely wrapped up in bedsheets, tied with a rope. This was not something that the strength of the third layer of Body Refining Tier could break out of, so she looked very funny.

Though the little girl's appearance has completely changed and was given a gorgeous transformation, there was absolutely no decrease in her ferocity. She had still her small mouth open, growling in a low voice at Liu Yu Tong.

Chapter 79: A Slip of the Tongue After Drinking

"You really weren't kidding, this little girl's teeth are really powerful!" Liu Yu Tong raised her left arm--bandages were wrapped around her palm and elbow. Obviously, she had been bitten.

...Previously, even Ling Han had been bitten when he let his guard down, proving that this little girl was really very good at sneak attacks. More importantly, you simply wouldn't believe how fierce her teeth were unless you experienced it with your own body.

"This girl was definitely born in the year of the dog!" Ling Han shook his head.

"She's much more powerful than a dog, she's definitely born in the year of the tiger!" Liu Yu Tong had already experienced some hardship, and shook her head with lingering fear. The first time she was bitten was indeed due to her carelessness, but she had still been bitten a second time even though she had had her guard up, proving how scary this wild little girl was.

Of course, this was also because she had not thought of harming the wild girl. Otherwise, no matter how sharp her teeth was, Liu Yu Tong would have easily killed her with one swat.

"Where did she come from?" Liu Yu Tong asked curiously.

"She had been living in the wild, raised by a tiger. I don't know anything else besides that," Ling Han bent down in front of the wild little girl, his hand extended to tease her. "Little girl, you probably don't have a name, so I'll have to give you one."

"Hu! Hu!" The wild little girl, kept opening and closing her mouth, her teeth clicking noisily together, as she chased after Ling Han's finger for a bite.

"You were raised by a tiger, so we'll call you Hu Niu then!" Ling Han said with a smile, then turned to Liu Yu Tong and asked, "Is there something like a birthmark on her? With that, we'll be able to help her find her real parents in the future."

"There is one!" Liu Yu Tong nodded. "There was a very strange mark on her ankle, though I can't tell if she was born with it or someone had marked her after her birth."

Ling Han lifted the covers to take a look, and there was indeed a mark on the little girl's left ankle. It was about the size of a copper coin, with a very complicated pattern. He really could not tell what the pattern meant. Theoretically, such a complicated marking should have been branded after her birth, but there was absolutely no sign of any such branding, so it looked as if she had been born with it.

It was really very odd.

"What do you plan for Hu Niu?" Liu Yu Tong asked. She had already started feeling affection for this little girl. "This little girl only thinks that she is a wild beast. If you don't plan well enough, she will definitely get into trouble."

Ling Han nodded and said, "Let's have her follow us first. Wait until she regains her human intelligence before we decide the next step."

Hu Niu did not think that she was a human being at all. She was like a wild cat or a tiger cub. They helped her put on some clothing, but she immediately ripped the clothes off her. If they did not tie her up, she would definitely be even more nimble than a monkey. What was even more of a headache for Ling Han was the fact that she did not eat cooked meat.

Whether it was grilled or boiled meat, she would not touch a single bite of it if it was put in front of her. Instead, her eyes would

fix upon Ling Han's neck, killing intent brimming within her eyes. Obviously, she would be happier to have Ling Han as her feast.

To remove her wild nature, the first step was to change her eating habits.

Ling Han took a bite of the grilled meat in front of the little girl, then put the grilled meat back down in front of her, then stepped back.

Hu Niu kept holding herself back from making any moves, but after half a day, her stomach grumbled, and her eyes had become even fiercer. Still, she did not make a move to eat the meat until it was about midnight, and she finally could bear it no longer. She squirmed a bit, and finally took and began to eat the grilled meat.

Both her hands and feet were tied, so she could only wriggle forward like a worm.

Her appetite was terrifyingly large, she quickly finished off such a huge pork leg. The little girl licked her lips as if she had not eaten enough. The expression on her face was very strange, because she had never eaten such delicious meat.

On the second day, Ling Han continued to attend various social gatherings, and on the fourth day, Li Hao and his other old friends finally found the opportunity to meet him.

"I never thought that you would actually manage to get the first place!"

"Yeah, you are really impressive, too amazing!"

"I am more envious of Li Hao. He's going to enter into Hu Yang Academy very soon and Big Brother Ling will take care of him there, so there's no fear that he's going to be bullied in an unfamiliar place."

Liu Dong and the others talked in succession as they continued to fill his cup with wine, rejecting his own attempts to reciprocate the gesture. Due to their inferior status, they could only wait until the

majority of the others had dispersed before they dared to come meet with Ling Han. Today, they naturally came with the intent to get Ling Han drunk.

However, when they had about reached half a round of drinks, Chen Peng Ju revealed a face filled with hesitation. After a long while, he finally spoke, "I may have caused a huge disaster."

"What's the matter?" Everyone else asked.

Chen Peng Ju clenched his teeth and said, "When we returned from the Balance Mountains, I shared a drink with one of my clansmen. I drank a bit too much, and it seems like I accidentally spoke about the incident with Hang Zhan."

"What!" Li Hao and the other four immediately stood, their faces instantly paling.

Hang Zhan was the grandson of the Seventh Elder of Stone Wolf Gate, and recently, people from the Stone Wolf Gate have all been searching for his killer. If the information was leaked out, then that Seventh Elder from Stone Wolf Gate would definitely come running.

A powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier!

Ling Han did not take it to heart too much. He too had the assistance of warriors of Gushing Spring Tier, and the Stone Wolf Gate should know that there stood three Black Grade alchemists behind him, so they definitely would not dare to be rash.

Perhaps only that Seventh Elder may possibly go on a mad rampage. After all, his flesh and blood grandson had died, so it depended on his temper. If he was the fiery, short-tempered type, then it was indeed possible that he would make a murderous charge towards Ling Han.

"So did you say something or not?" Liu Dong asked anxiously. Guo Rock Town fell within the area under the jurisdiction of the Stone Wolf Gate, and the Seventh Elder had just cause on his side--

vengeance for his grandson--so even if he massacred their clans, the most the Da Yuan King would do was to verbally reprimand him.

After all, this was a world where the strongest was respected.

"I really can't remember, I really drank too much that day!" Chen Peng Ju said, scowling miserably.

Ling Han thought for a moment, then said, "If that person from the Stone Wolf Gate really went charging to your clans, then just be honest and tell him to come look for me."

"No, Big Brother Ling, we will definitely not betray you!"

"That's right, how could we be so disloyal!"

Liu Dong and the others all shook their heads in refusal. But were their words true, and how many of them were actually speaking truthfully... that was another matter entirely.

Ling Han smiled, and said, "There's no harm, this is the truth anyways. Moreover, I have the ability to protect myself, so I do not fear that Seventh Elder. But for you guys, I can't guarantee your safety, so listen to me and tell the truth."

Seeing Ling Han insist so strongly, Liu Dong and the rest could only nod their heads in agreement while hoping Chen Peng Ju's tongue had not slipped after drinking. If that was the case, then all would be well.

With such a heavy worry weighing down on their hearts, the atmosphere obviously became very stifling, so very soon, the gathering concluded and everyone returned to their own respective homes.

When Ling Han returned to the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, he saw Liu Yu Tong was teaching Hu Niu how to speak. However, the wild girl was still very violent--she did not pay any attention to Liu Yu Tong's attempts and only kept baring her teeth and snarling, looking very much like a little tiger.

Ling Han laughed loudly, and said, "You have to take advantage of her weakness, doesn't the little girl like to eat? So you can just use food as a reward. If she performs well, give it to her, making her slowly learn to obey you."

Liu Yu Tong rolled her eyes at him, and said in annoyance, "You really think it's like raising a kitten or a puppy?"

"This girl is much fiercer than any kitten or puppy!" Ling Han said with a click of his tongue. He stretched out a hand to touch Hu Niu's head, and the girl immediately tried to bite him, but thankfully, he managed to pull his hand back in time.

"Kou, kou, kou," a series of knocks was heard from the door. Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong both turned around to see an alchemist's apprentice standing at the doorway, who said, "Young Master Ling, there arrived someone who claims he is from the Ling Clan of Gray Cloud Town outside. He says he has some urgent matter and wishes to meet you."

"Oh?" Ling Han walked out. What could it be? His father had just returned, so logically, there shouldn't be any big issues, right?

Could it be... the Seventh Elder of Stone Wolf Gate?

Alarm rose in his heart, and he immediately quickened his walk into a run. Seeing this, Liu Yu Tong left Hu Niu behind and quickly followed after.

Hu Niu = tiger girl.

Chapter 80: Comeback of the Cheng Clan

Time slowly turned back to a few days ago.

Gray Cloud Town, Cheng Clan Residence.

An extremely powerful aura suddenly spread out from the deepest parts of the Cheng Clan Residence. It was a very terrifying aura, so much that an intense feeling of fear rose within the heart of even an elite in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier like Cheng Wen Kun.

Yet Cheng Wen Kun did not feel anxious at all. Instead, an overjoyed expression appeared on his face and he actually started to wave his hands and dance around, "Third Uncle has broken through! Hahaha, Third Uncle has broken through! Ling Clan, you people were so arrogant before, but you would never have thought that my Third Uncle has been in seclusion all this while, breaking through to Gushing Spring Tier!"

His expression turned grim all of a sudden, and he declared, "From now onwards, there will be no more Ling Clan in Gray Cloud Town!"

"Hahahaha!" A bout of loud laughter was heard, and a thin old man was taking big strides into the Main Hall. Waves of terrifying power continuously spread out from his body as he approached. This was because he had just broken through, and so had not yet managed to completely control his own power.

He was Cheng Wen Kun's Third Uncle, Cheng Ji Yu, a martial arts maniac. He was already acclaimed as the top elite martial artist of the whole Cheng Clan years ago, yet did not have much interest in having power over the clan. Instead, he had kept himself in seclusion to break through to Gushing Spring Tier. Even in their own Cheng Clan, many clansmen had all thought that he had long since died.

And his hard work had paid off, for he had successfully broken through to Gushing Spring Tier. This was the strongest level of existence in the whole of Gray Cloud Town, more than enough to sweep away all opponents with his overwhelming might.

"Greetings, Third Uncle! Congratulations, Third Uncle!" Cheng Wen Kun half-knelt on the ground, his face filled with overwhelming joy.

"En, rise!" Cheng Ji Yu raised his hand. His eyes turned away from Cheng Wen Kun, and he said, "Call Xiao Yuan and the others back. I have not seen them for quite a few years."

"Third Uncle, Xiao Yuan, he... he's dead!" Cheng Wen Kun said, choking with grief.

"What!" Cheng Ji Yu suddenly slammed a hand onto the table. "Peng," this table made of excellent sandalwood instantly turned into broken pieces. His furious eyes widened, and he said, "Who has killed my grandson?"

Cheng Xiao Yuan was Cheng Ji Yu's direct grandson. He had also inherited the latter's talent, and as a result, was taken in as a disciple by the Stone Wolf Sect. Not even Cheng Hao or Cheng Xiang had this kind of talent.

"That little bastard from the Ling Clan, Ling Han!" Cheng Wen Kun immediately said.

"Pa!"

Cheng Ji Yu's hand rose and fell quickly, giving Cheng Wen Kun a slap. He sneered, "Then what are you doing, still sitting here? Why did you not come see me with the head of that little bastard?"

Cheng Wen Kun did not dare to have any feelings of anger. In front of a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier, he wouldn't be able to raise even a single finger. He quickly knelt, and said, "How could I not want to avenge Xiao Yuan? It's just that there is an elder from Stone Wolf Sect supporting him, I can't touch him!"

"An elder from Stone Wolf Sect?" Cheng Ji Yu's eyes narrowed slightly. All the Elders of Stone Wolf Sect were in Gushing Spring Tier while he himself had just broken through to this tier. Whoever that Elder was, it was impossible he would be able to match him in a battle.

But very quickly, he gave a hump, and said, "At most, that little bastard must have curried a bit of favor with that Elder. Even if I killed him, that Elder would never think of declaring a blood feud with me."

"Let's go. Come with me and we will immediately charge towards the Ling Clan Residence. Since he dared to kill my grandson, then I will slaughter every clansman of the Ling Clan in exchange!"

Cheng Wen Kun was of course overjoyed. He had been afraid that Cheng Ji Yu would fall back, but thanks to the death of Cheng Xiao Yuan, Cheng Ji Yu was overwhelmed with rage, so much that he had no fear for even an Elder of Stone Wolf Sect.

Practically the whole Cheng Clan moved out, all of them bursting with killing intent as they made their way to the Ling Clan Residence.

Moving so pompously through the streets of course attracted the attention of the smaller clans in the town, as they all came out to observe the spectacle.

"What's the matter with the Cheng Clan?"

"Could they be about to start a war with one of the clans?"

"Aside from the Ling Clan, what other clan is worthy of such a big movement from the Cheng Clan?"

"That can't be true, can it? The power of the Ling Clan is practically equal to the power of the Cheng Clan, and if a war sparks up between these two great clans, both sides would only suffer. The Cheng Clan couldn't be so foolish, right?"

"No, no. Don't you guys know that the Cheng Clan is not having a

good time lately? I heard that their main source of income has received an all-out suppression from the Ling Clan, and now, they can't even afford to pay the salaries of their servants."

"Yes, yes, yes. I heard about that too. Lately, many of the servants and guards of Cheng Clan have all secretly ran off."

"Are they in such a terrible condition? Then no wonder the Cheng Clan is going all out now. Otherwise, they'd be wiped out by the Ling Clan in the future. At least, if they made a gamble now, there could be a chance of victory for them."

Cheng Wen Kun heard the discussions from around him, and could not stop a cold smile from appearing on his face. Going all out? How could that be? They now had a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier fighting on their side, and they were going to wipe out the Ling Clan!

Going all out? Only the Ling Clan needed to do that, but it would all be pointless effort. One finger of a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier would be enough to suppress all resistance.

The Cheng Clan advanced like a great flood while the townspeople followed behind them to watch the ensuing show. This was a great battle between the two Great Clans. If anyone of them missed it, they'd definitely regret it for life.

Very quickly, they set out from the town's east side and arrived at the west side, which was where the Ling Clan Residence was located.

With such a big commotion, it of course caused a disturbance within the Ling Clan. Ling Dong Xing had just returned, and he immediately stepped out, with his clansmen behind him.

"Ling Clan Head, long time no see," Cheng Wen Kun raised a hand, and all the clansmen of the Cheng Clan halted their steps. He smiled at Ling Dong Xing, his face filled with smugness because very soon, this old rival of his would be kneeling down in

submission in front of him.

Ling Dong Xing frowned. They had obviously come with bad intentions! He raised his voice and said, "Brother Cheng has brought so many people here, are you here to make a demonstration?"

"Hahahaha!" Cheng Wen Kun laughed loudly, before suddenly stopping. He said in a deep voice, "That's right, I'm here today to make a demonstration! Ling Dong Xing, immediately order the members of your clan to surrender, and I can consider killing a few people less!"

"Cheng Wen Kun, have you gone mad?" Ling Dong Xing asked coldly. This was a humongous joke.

"You think I'm joking with you?" Cheng Wen Kun laughed coldly.

"Are you not?" Ling Dong Xing asked back.

"Of course not!" A cold voice declared. An old man with a tall, thin figure left the ranks of the Cheng Clan and passed Cheng Wen Kun by, his face filled with killing intent.

"Yi, who's this old man?" Those who had gathered around to watch the spectacle were all curious about the identity of this mysterious old man.

"Was there such a person in the Cheng Clan? It looks like his status is not beneath Cheng Wen Kun's."

"I've got it, he's Cheng Ji Yu!" An old man suddenly gasped in surprise. "Everyone said that he has long died, I never thought he's actually still alive!"

Ling Dong Xing of course recognized Cheng Ji Yu, though the latter now looked much older than he had last seen him. He raised his clasped hands in Cheng Ji Yu's direction as a sign of respect to someone from the generation before his. But the issue now concerned the pride of the two clans, so naturally, he would not give in easily. He said, "If the Cheng Clan insists on battle, there is

no member of the Ling Clan that is afraid of death!"

"Heng, you think you're worthy of standing as an equal with my Cheng Clan?" Cheng Ji Yu stretched out a hand, and pressed down on Ling Dong Xing, "I'll put you down first!"

"You've gone too far!" Ling Dong Xing raised his palms in a counterattack. He had been praised as the top genius in the whole of Gray Cloud Town in the past, and so of course possessed exceptional power. As his palms moved, more than ten images of palm strikes could be seen, and the attacks were extremely fast.

"How could a firefly be worthy of competing with the moon over which is brighter?" Cheng Ji Yu's finger extended, and there actually appeared a gigantic palm about the size of a millstone which pressed down on Ling Dong Xing.

"Origin Power given form, Gushing Spring Tier!" Ling Dong Xing gasped in shock, his face immediately turning pale. He finally understood where the Cheng Clan got such confidence from.

Cheng Ji Yu had actually broken through to Gushing Spring Tier!

Chapter 81: The Great Calamity of the Ling Clan

The gigantic hand made of Origin Power clapped down and sure enough, it completely suppressed Ling Dong Xing and even sealed his Dantian. The current Ling Dong Xing was now no stronger than any ordinary person.

"Hahahaha!" Cheng Wen Kun laughed loudly. He felt very well; he was extremely delighted at this long-awaited scene.

From the moment he had awakened his Spirit Base and began his path of cultivation, he had always been compared with Ling Dong Xing, but Ling Dong Xing's prowess had always exceeded his own and he could only be considered the second best. Fortunately, Ling Dong Xing had never managed to break through to Gushing Spring Tier, which gave him a faint ray of hope.

And now such a close rival that had always been weighing him down was actually so easily suppressed, how could he not be ecstatic at this? But at the same time, he was also extremely shocked. Gushing Spring Tier was really too powerful, Cheng Ji Yu had just barely broken through and Ling Dong Xing was practically defenseless against him!

"Take all of them down! Whoever dares to resist, kill them with no exceptions!" He commanded coldly, and with a wave of his hand, all the martial artists of the Cheng Clan behind him charged towards the Ling Clan, moving forwards in a very imposing manner.

On the other hand, the Ling Clan, due to the suppression of their Clan Head, as well as the fact that the opposing party had a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier on their side, suffered a drastic decrease in their morale, so they couldn't put up any efficient resistance. There were a few clansmen in Element Gathering Tier who had attempted to flee yet all of them were

chased down by Cheng Ji Yu, and with a palm strike, they were all beaten half to death.

"I never thought that the Cheng Clan actually still had a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier as their trump card!"

"He should have just broken through recently, otherwise, they wouldn't have waited until now to make their comeback."

"The saying that every dog has its day is really true, who would have thought that the Cheng Clan would actually be able to make a gigantic comeback out of nowhere precisely when they were forced into such dire straits."

"According to the temperament of the clansmen of the Cheng Clan, I'm afraid that no one from the Ling Clan would be able to escape with their lives!"

"Ai, the Cheng Clan will be in charge of the town in the future, and our days probably wouldn't be easy after this!"

All of the spectators were astonished at the might of Cheng Ji Yu, but could also not help sighing and shaking their heads. All of the people of the Cheng Clan were arrogant and overbearing, and in the future where their clan was the one in charge, the townspeople would probably be having hard times ahead of them.

Less than half an hour later, all of the clansmen of the Ling Clan were practically taken down. There were only a mere several clansmen who had businesses outside of the Ling Clan Main Residence that had fortunately escaped this calamity temporarily.

"Where is Ling Han!" Cheng Ji Yu approached Ling Dong Xing, killing intent brimming in his eyes. He had commanded the others to search for Ling Han, yet the latter could not be found anywhere in the Ling Clan Residence.

"Hahahaha!" Ling Dong Xing laughed loudly, "My son has already been taken as a disciple by the Hu Yang Academy. If you people dare to touch a single hair on his head, that would be equivalent to

declaring war on the Imperial Family of Rain Country!"

Cheng Wen Kun walked over, and said, "That trash son of yours entering Hu Yang Academy? Who are you trying to fool!"

Ling Dong Xing spat and said, "My son not only is going to enter Hu Yang Academy, he's also the first place champion of this time's Da Yuan Tournament! In future, he'd at least manage to break through to Spiritual Ocean Tier, so just wait!"

"Nonsense!" Cheng Wen Kun scoffed, "That trash son of yours dreams of taking the first place in Da Yuan Tournament? Ling Dong Xing, you really like to indulge in fantasies to actually use such a hilarious story to attempt to fool us!"

Actually, if he had said that Ling Han was able to enter into Hu Yang Academy, Cheng Wen Kun would still have believed him. After all, Cheng Xiao Yuan was defeated by Ling Han, but now he's saying that Ling Han got the first place? What a gigantic joke!

This time's Da Yuan Tournament was the gathering place of geniuses. There were powerful warriors from the previous Da Yuan Tournament like the Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji, as well as new talents like Baili Teng Yun and Xia Zhong Guang. How could Ling Han be able to win?

"Heng, so what if he has been accepted by the Hu Yang Academy? As long as he has not stepped into the Hu Yang Academy, he cannot be considered as a disciple of Hu Yang Academy!" Cheng Wen Kun's killing intent soared, and then he spoke to Cheng Ji Yu, "Third Uncle, why don't we hang them all up at the entrance to the town and wait until Ling Han, that little beast, returns then kill all of them?"

"Very well, we'll do that. I want to scoop out the heart and dig out the lungs of that little bastard, Ling Han, in front of him and make him also have a taste of losing his own flesh and blood!" Cheng Ji Yu coldly humped.

"We only need to leave about ten plus of them alive, as for the others.... kill them all!" Cheng Wen Kun said deeply.

"Cheng Wen Kun, you dare!" Ling Dong Xing roared. The clansmen of the Ling Clan alone numbered a few hundred, and added with their servants and guards, those that did not share their surname, the total reached over a thousand. And now only about ten plus would be left alive, so how many people would be killed?

"Why do I not dare?" Cheng Wen Kun laughed coldly. This was establishing the might of the Cheng Clan, sacrificing the lives of the clansmen of the Ling Clan to let the townspeople of Gray Cloud Town know that this would be the inevitable result when opposing their Cheng Clan!

"Kill them!" He shouted loudly.

"Pu, pu, pu..." one by one, their heads were chopped off with no exceptions. It was a complete bloodbath, and corpses lay everywhere.

Not every clansman of the Ling Clan was unafraid of death. Many of them had begged for mercy, but it was pointless. The Cheng Clan was determined to wipe the Ling Clan out of existence, and had absolutely no intention to accept surrender. There was only slaughter, which transformed the whole Ling Clan Residence into a realm of death.

When Ling Dong Xing watched all this happen before his eyes, he felt like it was him that was being torn apart. All of these people were his clansmen, and as the Clan Head, how could his heart not be bleeding at this horrific scene? But he was still more worried about his son--if Ling Han returned, what if he fell into the hands of the Cheng Clan?

Though Ling Han had an affable relationship with quite a few Black Grade alchemists, the problem was, would the Cheng Clan believe him? Moreover, the news that Ling Han had won the first

place champion of the Da Yuan Tournament had not yet spread to these parts, so the Cheng Clan would naturally not have any worries about attacking his son.

If his son died, then even if he himself died, how could he bear to face his wife?

His heart was burning with anxiety, yet there was nothing he could do.

The remaining ten plus survivors of the Ling Clan were dragged to the east entrance of the town, where ten plus short wooden pillars had been set up. Ling Dong Xing and the others all had had their Dantian sealed, and all of them were forced to kneel on the ground, their hands and feet tied to the wooden pillars.

"Wu, wu, wu, Big Brother Da Xiong!" Ling Zi Xuan wept bitterly. She was one of the few survivors, yet maybe not one of the fortunate.

"Pa!"

One of the clansmen of the Cheng Clan gave her a slap, and shouted, "Stop crying!"

Yet Ling Zi Xuan wept even louder, enraging him, and he quickly drew the saber at his waist.

"Forget it, forget it!" Someone persuaded him. Perhaps it was due to the fact that Ling Zi Xuan was really too young, causing mercy to rise within him. "Just let her cry as much as she likes, we can use that as a show of deterrence. This is the fate that awaits anyone who dares to oppose our Cheng Clan!"

"Hehe!"

"What Clan Head, you're still trampled under my feet now!" One of them stepped on Ling Dong Xing's head. He even deliberately smeared the dirt on his shoe onto Ling Dong Xing's face, causing Ling Dong Xing to tremble with rage.

"Hahaha, so what if you're in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier? Now even a mere sixth layer of Body Refining Tier can easily trample on you!"

"Ling Clan is finished! Now, the Gray Cloud Town belongs to our Cheng Clan!"

The night passed. The ten plus remaining survivors of the Ling Clan were all shivering as they suffered from the cold, so much that even ice had formed on their hair ends. Moreover, after nearly a day without any food or water, their stomachs were all rumbling with hunger.

Cheng Wen Kun appeared. He wanted to see as every bit of hope slowly disappeared from the eyes of his longtime rival, and finally see as he'd be flung into absolute despair after seeing his only son die in front of his very eyes. It would only be at that moment that he would kill Ling Dong Xing, and finally end the rivalry that had persisted between them for more than thirty years.

"Ling Dong Xing, are you regretting it yet?" He mocked and ridiculed. Only when he was satisfied would he leave, and the next day, he would appear again punctually to continue making fun of this former rival of his.

In the blink of an eye, three days had passed.

Ling Dong Xing and the others were all left barely alive. After a whole three days without any food, if they had not been fed water, they would definitely have died from dehydration. But they were currently extremely weak, so much that they didn't even have the energy to curse at their captors.

"Report!" A man raced over, half kneeling on the ground, he said, "Informing the Clan Head, we've discovered signs of Ling Han, he's about fifty miles away from the town!"

"Hahahaha!" Cheng Wen Kun was stunned for a moment, before laughing loudly. With a wave of his hand, he commanded,

"Quickly go and fetch Third Uncle. He will soon be able to have his revenge."

Chapter 82: The Violent Fury of Ling Han

Ling Han raced out, and very quickly arrived at the room the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion had arranged for receiving guests. This room would usually only be used by the bigger customers of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, but because Ling Han's status was a bit unique, his visitor had also been brought here.

He pushed the door open and entered, immediately asking, "What's happened at the clan?"

There was a middle-aged man who had been continuously pacing to and fro inside and when he saw Ling Han, he immediately rushed towards him like an arrow shot from a bow.

"Uncle Yang Ping!" Ling Han recognized his visitor. He was a member of one of the branch families of the Ling Clan.

"Young Master Han!" Ling Yang Ping's fiery eyes immediately brimmed with tears as he spoke, his voice choking with insurmountable grief. "Our Ling Clan, Ling Clan... has been destroyed by the Cheng Clan!"

Cheng Clan?

Ling Han said quickly, "Uncle Yang Ping, calm down first and slowly explain. What exactly happened?"

Ling Yang Ping regained his composure a bit, before he once again began to speak, though his hands were still shaking, "There's an ancient monster in the Cheng Clan, called Cheng Ji Yu. Everyone said he'd already died long ago, but we never imagined that he had actually been in seclusion all this while! A few days ago, he broke through to Gushing Spring Tier! The moment he had broken through, he immediately led the Cheng Clan and charged towards our clan, killing almost every member of the clan!"

"Kuang," this news was like a bolt out of the blue. All of a sudden, Ling Han could only feel his sight darken as he very nearly passed

out from such a blow. Fortunately, Liu Yu Tong acted in time and held onto him in support. Otherwise, he'd definitely have fallen in a dead faint onto the ground. He forcibly calmed himself and asked, "What about my father?"

"Clan Head was apprehended by Cheng Ji Yu and is now being tied up at the town entrance, left to suffer from the elements, baked by the sun, pounded by the rain, and freezing as the weather turns cold. Cheng Ji Yu has declared that he would kill you in front of our Clan Head when you return before killing all the other survivors!" Ling Yang Ping raged, "I was off on an errand out of town when this happened, and thus fortunately escaped this disaster. Once I got news of it, I immediately rushed here. Young Master Han, you must not act rashly, or you would definitely fall into the trap laid by the Cheng Clan. They are currently waiting for you to come walking right into their trap."

Ling Yang Ping was naturally filled with anxiety. From the moment he entered Da Yuan City, he had already heard of how Ling Han had won the first place in this year's Da Yuan Tournament, defeating geniuses such as Fourth Prince and Jin Wuji. This meant that Ling Han's future was filled with unlimited possibilities. As long as he managed to survive to see the age of thirty, he would definitely be able to become a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier.

He was of course afraid that Ling Han would act rashly. Ling Han was a young man after all, and young men were always impetuous and easily gave in to emotions. After finding out that his own father was currently being held captive, his first reaction would of course be to rescue him--without knowing that this would only cause him to lose his own life and bring a true end to the last hopes of the Ling Clan.

"I understand. Please don't worry, Uncle Yang Ping. I know my own limits!" Once he found out his father had not died yet, Ling Han's heart calmed; yet how could he just stay there without

making any move at all?

Forced to kneel at the town entrance, suffering all manner of hardship due to the weather, and watched by others like some kind of show.... was this how a human being should be treated?

Moreover, even if a martial artist of Element Gathering Tier possessed a strong life force and vitality, without food and water, he would not last much longer than a normal person. The maximum amount of time he would be able to hold on for would be five or six days--and then he'd definitely die.

He had to act immediately!

After calling Liu Yu Tong to accompany him, the two of them immediately set out, rushing back to Gray Cloud Town.

Gushing Spring Tier?

If his opponent had broken through to Gushing Spring Tier a long time ago and possessed the battle prowess of someone in the second or third layer of Gushing Spring Tier, then he may still feel afraid. But Cheng Ji Yu had only just broken through--with his current prowess, he felt that there was no need to fear.

...Furthermore, the Black Tower in his Dantian afforded him a single chance to increase his cultivation level by a complete tier, allowing his cultivation level to instantly zoom up to the fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier!

Liu Yu Tong brought Hu Niu with them and the group of three, riding on two horses, raced back toward Gray Cloud Town. However, as she did not know that Ling Han possessed a blessing from the Black Tower, she naturally informed Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan of the happenings in Gray Cloud Town.

The two old men had been in the process of attempting to concoct the Reverse Pill. When he heard the news, Zhu He Xin was instantly enraged. In his heart, he considered Ling Han to be half his master, and now his master's father was suffering such

humiliation at the hands of his enemies, waiting to be killed. How could he not be furious?

He was not the only one furious. Zhang Wei Shan was also extremely furious. He owed Ling Han a debt of gratitude and had been troubled about being unable to repay this debt. He had immediately set out together with Zhu He Xin.

These two Black Grade alchemists immediately set off, and this piece of news, as if it had suddenly sprouted wings, spread to every corner of Da Yuan City.

"What? Ling Han's father has been captured by the Cheng Clan, waiting to be executed together with Ling Han after the latter returns?"

"What kind of clan is this Cheng Clan? They're really too bold, aren't they?"

"Ah, the Cheng Clan is actually just a minor clan, and only recently did one of their clansmen break through to Gushing Spring Tier?"

"Go, go, go. Immediately make arrangements to assist Ling Han in his rescue effort. This is a wonderful opportunity; we'd be able to form a friendly relationship with a future ruler!"

"Hahaha, this is really a godsend of an opportunity. With barely sacrificing anything in return, we'd be able to form a good relationship with Ling Han! Immediately form a group and follow me to Gray Cloud Town!"

"..."

When all the Great Clans of the city heard the news, they were both shocked and overjoyed. Their shock was due to the audacity and boldness of the Cheng Clan, while their joy was because an excellent opportunity to form a close relationship with Ling Han had fallen into their laps.

Just think, they sent their people to help Ling Han rescue his

father. How big would this debt of gratitude be?

"Let us quickly set out, and head towards Gray Cloud Town!"

Any clan that had the a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier immediately set out at the first available opportunity. They all wanted to be the first person to rescue Ling Dong Xing from his captivity. The magnitude of such a debt would be enough for Ling Han to use his whole lifetime to repay them!

Because of the panic Ling Han was experiencing, they did not stop at any moment on the journey to rest. Thankfully, their mounts were "Black Foot Horses", which possessed a strand of demonic beast blood. Otherwise, normal horses would definitely have died from exhaustion on the way.

After a mere half day's journey, Gray Cloud Town had already come into sight.

From afar, Ling Han could already see that there were over ten people kneeling at the town entrance, and the one in the very middle, wasn't that just Ling Dong Xing?

"Father!" He shouted loudly, his tone filled with immeasurable rage.

"Hahahaha, this little bastard had really dared to return!" Cheng Wen Kun laughed loudly, raising his right foot to step on Ling Dong Xing's face, and said, "All right, I admit it now. You truly have a good son. He clearly knows that it is dangerous, but still returned to die!"

He of course did not mean it as a compliment. He only wanted to make things worse for Ling Dong Xing.

After nearly four days without food, Ling Dong Xing's sight had become blurry from hunger, so he couldn't see Ling Han who was some distance away from town. He only had the vague feeling that he might have heard Ling Han's voice. He opened his mouth, and in a weak voice, said, "Han'er, run! Run quickly!"

"Don't waste your energy. He can't even hear you!" Cheng Wen Kun stepped on Ling Dong Xing's face, and even deliberately ground his foot in, a malevolent expression on his face. His limited patience had long been exhausted through the last few days, and he could not wait to slaughter this pair of father and son.

"Old dog, you're looking for death!" Ling Han urged his horse into a gallop and arrived. He leaped off his horse. "Shua," his sword was drawn from its sheath, immediately sweeping towards Cheng Wen Kun.

"Shua, shua, shua," five flashes of Sword Qi appeared in a dance!

Due to his towering rage, Ling Han actually underwent a breakthrough, and stepped into the level of having five flashes of Sword Qi!

"What!" Cheng Wen Kun was flabbergasted. There actually appeared five flashes of Sword Qi in front of his eyes!

He hurriedly put up his hands to parry the incoming blow, but Ling Han's attack was filled with his fury, so of course, he had done his very best. Added with the five flashes of Sword Qi, what magnitude of power was that?

"Ah...!!!" Cheng Wen Kun released a horrible scream. Only one strike was enough to fling him away, and blood splattered from his body.

"Peng," he fell on the ground. He hadn't even managed to get up and a foot had descended from above, ruthlessly stepping down on his face. Cheng Wen Kun suddenly felt as if he had charged at full speed and crashed into a boulder--as if his head would be bursting at any moment. With a "ka", his nose was broken, and he had lost about four or five teeth, his face completely covered with blood.

"You dare to humiliate my father, I will make you experience living hell!" Ling Han said in a deep voice. This time, he was really enraged.

Chapter 83: How do you want to Die?

"Ta, ta, ta, ta." The sound of racing hooves was heard, and Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan had also arrived, just moments behind them; their arrival caused Liu Yu Tong to feel greatly relieved.

She jumped off her own horse and began to set free Ling Dong Xing and the others so that Ling Han would not have anything to worry about.

"Father, quick, swallow this Protect Origin Pill!" Ling Han took out a pill bottle, and from within, he took out a green-colored pill before feeding it to Ling Dong Xing.

Ling Dong Xing had no special feelings about this. Since it was his son giving it to him, he'd just swallow it obediently. But Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan had both widened their eyes in shock, for this Protect Origin Pill was also an alchemical pill that had been lost in the passage of time and its effects were even better than the Reverse Pill.

Although the Reverse Pill had a very powerful name, but compared to the Protect Origin Pill... to put it simply, there was actually a very big gap between the two.

Both these pills were Yellow Grade mid level alchemical pills, but they were very difficult to concoct. See, Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan had already obtained the complete pill formula long ago, yet had not yet concocted the Reverse Pill even after so many days of hard work. Yet Ling Han had now taken out a Protect Origin Pill, an alchemical pill that was even more difficult to concoct.

How could the two of them not be utterly astonished at this!

Ling Han handed a Protect Origin Pill to the remaining ten plus survivors of the Ling Clan. This Protect Origin Pill was the result of his efforts to improve upon the basic Reverse Pill, so of course, its effects were even better.

"Big Brother Han, Da Xiong is dead. Daddy and Mommy are dead too, wu, wu wu!" Ling Zi Xuan wept, as she lay weakly in Ling Han's arms. However, no tears fell from her eyes, for her tears had long dried up.

"I will avenge Da Xiong, I will avenge everyone!" Ling Han lightly rubbed the little girl's back, and said, "Xuan Xuan, be good. Go to sleep, and when you wake up, everything will be better!"

The little girl nodded. After the suffering that she had experienced these four days, she had long reached her limits, and very soon fell asleep in Ling Han's arms.

Ling Han handed the little girl over to Liu Yu Tong before his eyes returned to Cheng Wen Kun, killing intent burning in them.

Although Hu Niu had been tied up and bundled onto the saddle, lying on her side, as she had grown up at the side of a fierce tiger since very young, she was extremely sensitive towards killing intent. She suddenly raised her head and a "hou, hou, hou" sound came from her mouth. She was obviously very excited.

"How is this possible! How could you possibly manage to form five flashes of Sword Qi!" Cheng Wen Kun got to his feet after much struggle. His nose had been flattened, one side of his mouth was bent out of shape, and his face was completely covered with blood.

"How do you want to die?" Ling Han said in a deep voice, "Would you like to be torn limb from limb or dismembered, or perhaps have your head shattered? I will allow you the chance to choose your own death!"

"Little bastard, don't you be arrogant. Even if you have formed five flashes of Sword Qi, it's useless. In front of absolute power, your only end would still be death!" Cheng Wen Kun taunted. "When my Third Uncle arrives, all of you will die!"

Ling Han shook his head, and said, "When I heard you say this, I

really thought that I was facing a profligate, spoiled young master in his teens who only knows how to use the adults of his clan as a threat and scare tactic! Humph, when that old creature arrives, I will naturally cut off his dog head!"

"Nonsense... ah!" Cheng Wen Kun screamed painfully. He was once again kicked down to the ground by Ling Han.

He was filled with immeasurable rage and humiliation. To have another person step on his face was the most humiliating thing in the world, and the one who had stepped on him was furthermore his sworn enemy's son--it was already enough that he could not defeat Ling Dong Xing, but now even Ling Dong Xing's son had the ability to step on his face... how could he bear such a thing?

And at this moment, the townspeople had all come out to watch the oncoming show after hearing the news, and those who lived nearer had all arrived. When they saw Ling Han, with an awe-inspiring presence and stepping on Cheng Wen Kun's face, it was as if everyone had turned into stone.

Before the appearance of Cheng Ji Yu, everyone in Gray Cloud Town had recognized Ling Dong Xing and Cheng Wen Kun as the strongest elite martial artists of the town, both being in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, with no one else being a match for either of them.

And now this person, who had once been recognized as the strongest of them all, was actually stepped on by Ling Han--how could anyone of them believe their own eyes?

Ling Han had once possessed the grand reputation of being trash of the worst quality!

Many of the disciples of Gray Cloud Academy recalled the words that Liu Yu Tong had once spoken--after three months, Ling Han would become an existence that everyone could only look up to.

Indeed, he was now even able to step on Cheng Wen Kun. Whom

amongst them would not look up to him?

But the problem now was, the strongest warrior in Gray Cloud Town was Cheng Ji Yu, an elite martial artist of Gushing Spring Tier!

No matter how powerful Ling Han was, how could he be more powerful than Gushing Spring Tier?

"He's done for. Once Cheng Ji Yu arrives, Ling Han would definitely be finished."

"Ai, it's really too bad for a genius of his caliber. Otherwise, he may even be able to become a powerful warrior of Spiritual Ocean Tier in the future!"

"Spiritual Ocean Tier, ah, you really dare to say that, that would mean being as strong as the Da Yuan King!"

"Think about it, Ling Han is only seventeen years old now, but he is already able to step on Cheng Wen Kun like this. How scary is his talent?"

"That's true."

The spectators all murmured to each other. All of them were not optimistic about Ling Han, thinking that he had come back to surrender to his death.

The formidable prowess of Gushing Spring Tier was embedded deep in the bones of all of them, especially in a small town like Gray Cloud Town. For them, a warrior of Gushing Spring Tier could practically be considered a god.

"Heng!" It was at this moment that a figure flew out from the town. The figure was moving extremely fast, even the speed of a galloping horse could not match its speed. Within a mere instant, the figure had already appeared at a near distance.

It was Cheng Ji Yu.

"Little bastard, so you are Ling Han? That evil fiend that has

killed my grandson?" Cheng Ji Yu's eyes were fixed upon Ling Han, his stare as intense as if he wanted to devour Ling Han.

"I am Ling Han, and today will be the day of your death!" Ling Han replied in kind.

"Hahahaha, I am a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier. What ability do you have to take my life?" Cheng Ji Yu did not feel in a rush to act. This was the chief culprit who had killed his grandson. He wanted to slowly torture this little bastard to death.

"And if we fight too?" Zhu He Xing and Zhang Wei Shan both stepped forwards.

"And who the heck are you-yi!" Cheng Ji Yu was initially indifferent, but when his eyes fell upon the two people who had spoken, his expression suddenly changed and he gasped in shock, "Gushing Spring Tier!"

Not just Gushing Spring Tier, but there were two of such powerful warriors in front of his eyes!

What!

The townspeople all gasped in shock. These two ordinary-looking old men were actually also powerful warriors of Gushing Spring Tier? Hiss, no wonder Ling Han dared to return. So he had actually obtained the assistance of two such elites of Gushing Spring Tier.

Cheng Ji Yu's face turned serious. He no longer had any intention of underestimating these two men, and said, "My two brothers, this brat has killed my grandson. No matter what benefits he has promised you, I will offer you double the amount, so please do not interfere."

Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan exchanged a look, before bursting into laughter simultaneously.

Offer them double the amount?

Who the f*** do you think you are? How many pill formulae do

you have in your possession, and how much understanding do you have in the field of alchemy that you actually dare to make such an overly exaggerated promise?

"How dare you! Young Friend Ling's problem is also our problem!" Zhang Wei Shan said, "Cheng, if you surrender, I can promise to beg for a bit of mercy from Young Friend Ling on your behalf, and grant you a swift death!"

Young Friend Ling?

"Si!"

Everyone either sucked air in abruptly between their barred teeth or gasped. These two powerful warriors of Gushing Spring Tier actually addressed Ling Han 'Young Friend', and completely appeared as if they were willing to share all of Ling Han's burdens with him. What kind of relationship was this?

Fortunately, neither Zhu He Xin or Zhang Wei Shan had worn the badges that proved their alchemist identity, or these townspeople would be even more astonished, for Black Grade low level alchemists possessed an even higher status than powerful warriors of Gushing Spring Tier.

"Must the two of you do this?" Cheng Ji Yu said in a deep voice. He had just broken through to Gushing Spring Tier, so his confidence level was off the charts. Moreover, he definitely did not believe that these two powerful warriors of Gushing Spring Tier would go all out for Ling Han. He could not think of anything that would cause them to do such a thing.

"Peng, peng, peng, peng." From a distance away, dirt and soil was flying in all directions as a group of riders was quickly making its way over.

"Brother Ling, I've brought my people to give you a hand!" A young man jumped off his horse and said to Ling Han, raising his clasped hands in the latter's direction. His group of riders had very

quickly arrived nearby.

It was Baili Teng Yun.

Chapter 84: Respective Arrival of Helpers

Baili Teng Yun himself did not attract much attention, but the group of sturdy men behind him caused all the spectators to be dumbstruck.

Because, embroidered on the breast of every one of them was the word: Baili.

Within the jurisdiction of Da Yuan City, there was only one party that dared to use the name Baili as their symbol, and that was the Baili Sect!

Aside from the Royal House of Da Yuan, one of the four greatest parties in the area!

"Pu!"

Quite a number of people had choked in shock. Though they did not recognize Baili Teng Yun, but since this young man had the ability to take command of such a large group of disciples from Baili Sect, his status would definitely not be too low. Moreover, he actually addressed Ling Han as brother and with such familiarity, so what did this signify?

That Ling Han had a very good relationship with the Baili Sect!

Cheng Ji Yu's expression changed once more. No matter how confident he was, he would never presume that he had the ability to oppose the Baili Sect. The latter actually had an elite warrior of the ninth layer of Gushing Spring Tier as support; not even if there was a hundred of him would he be able to oppose an opponent of such overwhelming might.

His only remaining hope now was that this supposedly very powerful brat did not actually possess a very high status in Baili Sect.

Hardly has one wave subsided when another rises. From afar, another bout of dust and dirt flew, and a second group of riders

was very quickly making its way over.

"Haha, so it appears that Brother Baili has arrived first!" A young man jumped off his horse. It was Jin Wuji. He raised his clasped hands in Ling Han's direction, and said, "Brother Ling, I've also brought some people from my humble clan to give you a hand. To actually dare to harm Uncle Ling, I would like to see who has such audacity!"

He had already dispersed the bad feelings between himself and Ling Han, so now the relationship between the two of them was quite friendly.

Cheng Ji Yu could not help giving a hump, and said, "And who are you, to dare talk so big!"

"How dare you!" One of the guards of the Jin Clan stepped out, "Have your dog's eyes gone blind, this is our clan's Third Young Master, Jin Wuji!"

"Pu!"

The townspeople had barely just regained their composure, and now suddenly there was another wave of shock and astonishment! Who was Jin Wuji? The Third Young Master of the Jin Clan, and also the most talented person amongst the younger generation of the Jin Clan! He may very possibly inherit the position of Clan Head of the Jin Clan in the future!

If that was true, then... would the "Brother Baili" Jin Wuji spoke of just now actually be Baili Teng Yun? After all, the Sect Master of the Baili Sect only had a single son, and he should be about sixteen or seventeen years old.

Hiss, two of the most powerful parties of Da Yuan City had arrived, and neither of them was represented by a minor character. One of them was the Young Sect Master, while the other was the future Clan Head--and they both treated Ling Han like a brother!

Were they fakes?

How could that be possible? Who dared to pass themselves off as these two in Da Yuan City? Were they tired of living?

Cheng Ji Yu finally revealed a most uneasy expression. Ling Han now had the protection of two ultra powerful parties, so even if he managed to somehow get through these two great parties to take Ling Han's life, he himself would also definitely be hunted down and killed by these two great parties.

All of a sudden, he was trapped in a dilemma. Should he get his revenge, or give it up?

He had not yet come to the realization that the matter today would not be solved with a simple 'I give up' from him. From the moment he had made a move towards the Ling Clan, his fate was already decided, and that was death!

"Teng, teng, teng..." from afar, another pack of riders were very rapidly nearing.

The townspeople were already numb with shock, thinking that could this be another member of one of the great powerful parties again?

"Hahahaha, Brother Jin, Brother Baili, you two have really arrived very quickly!" Amidst a bout of laughter, Li Dong Yue leaped off his horse, strode over and said, "Brother Ling, if you have need of our Stone Wolf Sect, you only have to say the word!"

"Hong," when they heard these words, all of them were struck with absolute astonishment.

Though the Jin Clan and the Baili Sect were indeed powerful on their own, still, they were based very far from here--the Stone Wolf Sect was their real overlord! When a mere Ma Lang had come here, he was already enough to cause everyone of them to feel fear and dread. And this person was actually able to treat Jin Wuji and Baili Teng Yun as brothers, so his status must definitely be above

Ma Lang.

Cheng Wen Kun was really about to start crying--what was going on here, why did so many of the ultra powerful parties appear one after another, and why were they all on Ling Han's side? Jin Clan, Baili Sect, Stone Wolf Sect... any one of these parties would be able to obliterate Cheng Clan ten times over with a mere twitch of their fingers!

"Thank you, everyone. Wait for me to kill my enemy, and we will have a good drink together!" Ling Han said, raising his clasped hands. "You can help me eliminate the Cheng Clan, just leave these two chief culprits to me!"

"You can depend on us!" Jin Wuji and the other two agreed straightaway. Putting aside the fact that all three of their parties collaborated together, even if there was only one of them here, their might would be more than enough to easily wipe out the Cheng Clan.

"No! No! No!" Cheng Wen Kun said, trembling, "You can't do this, you can't do this!"

"When you wiped out my Ling Clan, why had you been so merciless then?" Ling Han said in a deep voice, "I have always been a very fair person. If others respect me, I will do the same. But if anyone dares to harm a single hair on the heads of my family, I will definitely return the favor a hundredfold!"

Jin Wuji and the other two leaders, with a wave of their hand, led their groups in an advance. Without an elite warrior like Cheng Ji Yu overseeing things, what could the Cheng Clan count as?

"Stop right there!" Cheng Ji Yu shouted loudly. He would of course not simply stand by and watch as his clan is being wiped out. But he had just raised his foot when he saw Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan had simultaneously leaped out and surrounded him, one of them in front of him, while the other behind him.

"Teng, teng, teng." And it was at this moment, that more and more people rushed over. Among them, there were minor clans of Da Yuan City as well as parties from other towns. Some even had elite martial artists of Gushing Spring Tier in their midst. They arrived one after the other, and practically drowned Gray Cloud Town with their numbers.

This was too scary. Now, aside from the Royal House of the Da Yuan King, all the parties with some reputation had practically all arrived.

And these people, they had all come because of Ling Han.

Since when had this Young Master Trash become so awesome?

Cheng Wen Kun's face had turned ashen--looks like Cheng Clan would not be able to escape this calamity that would befall them today! He was filled with regret. Why had he not simply killed off Ling Dong Xing? At least then, he would have pulled this sworn enemy of his to death with him, so he would not have a very lonely journey to the afterlife.

"Pa!"

Ling Han's foot lowered, and stepped heavily upon Cheng Wen Kun's face, "Old dog, you still dare to have evil intentions even now!"

"Hahahaha, so what if I die? Your Ling Clan clansmen have also died with me!" Cheng Wen Kun knew that he would not be able to survive, so he decided to simply throw caution to the wind, and glared furiously at Ling Han.

"Pa!"

Ling Han gave another stamp of his foot and shattered all the teeth in Cheng Wen Kun's mouth. The agony caused him to move around vigorously, yet because Ling Han was still stepping on him, he only managed to continuously flop around on the ground.

"Brother Ling!" A tall, young man stepped out from the ranks of

the others. This young man's aura swept out in terrifying ripples. It was Qi Yong Ye.

"Greetings, Fourth Prince!" The others all bowed in greeting.

Fourth, Fourth Prince?

The townspeople of Gray Cloud Town were all stunned for a very long moment. Finally, they came back to reality, and quickly followed the others to bow down in respect. Their thoughts were all filled with astonishment.

Now, all the different parties of Da Yuan City had arrived, and they had only one reason for coming here--Ling Han.

What magic did he actually possess?

And in this moment, Cheng Wen Kun had dropped completely into the depths of despair. Even the Royal House of Da Yuan had come because of Ling Han, so what hope was there left for the Cheng Clan?

"Are you going to force me to go all out?" Cheng Ji Yu roared loudly, his eyes wide with fury. From the looks of it, the Cheng Clan would definitely be wiped out today. Therefore, he definitely had to escape and survive, so that he could find a chance in the future to kill Ling Han.

Not just Ling Han, but also all the other survivors of the Ling Clan!

"Your only path is death!" Zhu He Xin said coldly. Cheng Ji Yu actually dared to harm the father of someone he thought of as half his master; the old man was also now in a towering rage.

Chapter 85: No More Cheng Clan

Cheng Ji Yu went all out. He wanted to cut out a path of blood and return later to claim his vengeance.

Theoretically, even if there were three of him, he would still be no match for either Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan, what more now that the two were working together? However, if a martial artist of Gushing Spring Tier threw all caution away and went all out, it was still a very scary thing. Not even Zhu He Xin or Zhang Wei Shan dared to jump into a head-on clash with Cheng Ji Yu. They did not want to be dragged down together with the latter after all.

Furthermore, how long could he last after throwing aside all caution? They only needed to stall him for a while, and after his burst of energy was exhausted, Cheng Ji Yu's battle prowess would naturally take a drastic drop, and by that time, it'd be extremely easy to defeat him.

"Little bastard, you'll definitely die! All the people in your Ling Clan will die!" Cheng Wen Kun called out severely. As long as Cheng Ji Yu managed to escape with his life, then the Ling Clan would definitely be eliminated! Unless Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan planned to stand guard at the Ling Clan Residence for the rest of their lives.

"Noisy!" Ling Han gave a cold hump, and his foot stamped down firmly. "Pa," and Cheng Wen Kun's entire head was stamped into pulp. Blood spurted out in a gush, and the headless body struggled for quite some time before its movements ceased.

This scene struck all the spectators speechless, as they thought that this young man really had guts of steel.

Killing a man was not impossible, but the scary thing was how coldly he had done such a deed. With one stamp of his foot, Cheng Wen Kun's head was smashed into pulp, yet there was no change of

expression on his face. It was just too gruesome.

"This brat from the Ling Clan has the qualifications to become a ruler—to never be merciful towards his enemies, and kill them ruthlessly!"

"That's right, a merciful person, no matter how talented they are, would never live very long!"

"But when I understood that, I was already over thirty years old, and this brat from the Ling Clan is currently only seventeen years old!"

"He's really impressive!"

Hu Niu's eyes were bright. She had the instincts of a wild beast, and could keenly sense the killing intent emanating from Ling Han. She was both afraid and excited, for it was a familiar feeling to her.

She wriggled around, and really wanted to pounce to Ling Han's side, but because both her arms and legs were tied up, she could only struggle around pointlessly.

Though Ling Han had killed one of the culprits responsible, his rage did not decrease in the slightest. The miserable and humiliated appearance of his father and his clansmen could not be removed from his mind's eye, so his killing intent burned even more strongly. His stare fixed upon Cheng Ji Yu. This was another culprit, or it could be claimed that he's the chief culprit of this entire calamity.

Because if it had not been for Cheng Ji Yu, how would the Cheng Clan have dared to assault the Ling Clan?

He definitely must kill this fiend with his own hands!

"Get out of my way!" He shouted loudly, and flew forward in a charge towards Cheng Ji Yu.

Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan were both flabbergasted. They

were about to stop Ling Han, so that he would not be embroiled in such a dangerous situation, yet Ling Han shouted, "I want to take down this old dog on my own, don't the two of you interfere!" His countenance was determined, and did not allow either of them the chance to refuse.

Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan could only step back, but they still prepared themselves. As soon as they saw Ling Han in danger, they would definitely step in and give him a hand--even if they would be rebuked by Ling Han later.

Ling Han stimulated the Lone Wolf's Blood, and his prowess, which was initially at the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier, was further upgraded. However, due to the fact that he had not suffered any debilitating injuries, the upgrade from Lone Wolf's Blood was not too big, and only allowed his battle prowess to reach the peak period of the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

But together with the rapid dance of five flashes of Sword Qi, and the Shocking Electricity Sword Arts, his might was still something to be feared.

Yet Cheng Ji Yu did not feel a single bit of fear. Giving a light snort, he struck repeatedly with his palms, which all transformed into gigantic hands formed of Origin Power, striking towards Ling Han. These gigantic hands of Origin Power were extremely solid, and easily crushed the incoming flashes of Sword Qi, fully displaying the might of a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier.

"Ga, ga, ga, little bastard, what you're doing now is only seeking your own death!" Cheng Ji Yu was extremely pleased. He could tell that whether it was Zhu He Xin, or Zhang Wei Shan, or the various parties of Da Yuan City, they had all actually come because of Ling Han.

Thus, as long as he managed to take down Ling Han, he'd be able to take him hostage and escape this siege.

When he was finally safe, he would of course kill Ling Han with a

single palm strike and thus achieve his vengeance, and would never again return to this place in his lifetime.

"Humph, today will be the day of your death!" Ling Han hissed, waving his sword repeatedly, the Sword Qi of his attacks seeming like rainbows.

However, the power gap between himself and Cheng Ji Yu was still too big. With one clap of the gigantic hand formed of Origin Power from Cheng Ji Yu, he could feel his internal organs trembling due to the impact. But because he had already learned the ability of Body of Dead Tree, and also possessed the Indestructible Heaven Scroll to help him recover his wounds, he only looked miserable. However, in truth, the repeated attacks actually helped to further stimulate the Lone Wolf's Blood, and allowed his power to increase even further.

Still, no matter how big the power upgrade was, it was impossible for his power to break through to Gushing Spring Tier.

Ling Han frowned. The space in his Dantian was now abnormally big, so his ability to last in battle was something to be feared, and together with the ability of self-recovery from the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, he could easily wait for Cheng Ji Yu to drive himself to death with exhaustion.

But he was acting out of revenge now, and to drag this battle out for such a long time...? He could not wait, and neither could Ling Dong Xing!

Moreover, he did not want Ling Dong Xing to worry any longer about him.

In this case!

Ling Han's gaze steeled, and without an ounce of hesitation, he communicated with the black tower. He wanted to use the blessing of the black tower to strengthen himself, and increase his battle prowess by an entire tier!

Black tower, come, give me power!

"Hum..." within his Dantian, the black tower gave a light tremble, and a mysterious power emanated from it as it started droning.

"Hong," this power gushed out within Ling Han's body, and increased his cultivation level at an extremely rapid rate—fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier, sixth layer, seventh layer... within the time for him to take a single breath, his cultivation level had broken through to Gushing Spring Tier, and continued to further increase after that, finally stopping at the fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier.

It had completely increased his cultivation level with a massive upgrade of a whole tier!

"What!" Having sensed the abominable increase in power within Ling Han, Cheng Ji Yu, Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan all felt as if their eyeballs were going to pop out due to this tremendous shock. How was this possible, a martial artist in the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier actually instantaneously increased his own cultivation level by an entire tier!

He truly deserved the name of alchemy genius!

Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan immediately thought that Ling Han must have swallowed some kind of alchemical pill to achieve such a power upgrade, and they could not help the admiration and reverence they felt towards Ling Han's abilities as an alchemist increasing. Whether there existed such an alchemical pill in this world, the two old men did not even have a moment of doubt. They had already come to the stage that they would blindly trust Ling Han's abilities as an alchemist.

"Damn you!" Cheng Ji Yu roared, and his palms struck repeatedly. One after another, gigantic hands of Origin Power came to life and headed towards Ling Han.

Ling Han gave a hump; his left hand curled into a fist and flew forward in his own attack.

Only his power had been upgraded to Gushing Spring Tier, so he still could not give form to his Origin Power. But that was all right, the power of the fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier would absolutely dominate the first layer, so with a single punch, the green-colored gigantic hand formed of Origin Power instantly shattered.

Ling Han had already charged forward, and with a wave of his sword, five flashes of Sword Qi flew forward.

"Pu!"

There instantly appeared five sword wounds on Cheng Ji Yu's chest, causing his chest to become a gory scene of blood and flesh. The wounds were so deep that even his bones and internal organs could faintly be seen.

"Old dog, hand over your life!" Ling Han said in a deep voice.

"Little bastard, you only forcibly increased your power to Gushing Spring Tier, but how much power would you actually be able to show? I will definitely be able to kill you!" Cheng Ji Yu released a furious roar. His hands moved continuously as he used the secret art of the Cheng Clan, Expert Armed Fist.

Unfortunately, though he had broken through to Gushing Spring Tier, and was now able to cultivate Black Grade martial arts techniques, the problem was that the Cheng Clan did not even possess Yellow Grade high level martial arts techniques—where would they have been able to get their hands on a Black Grade martial arts technique?

This Expert Armed Fist was only a Yellow Grade mid level technique, so its power was very limited. There was no way it would be able to compensate for the power gap between the first and fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier.

Ling Han smiled coldly. If an ordinary martial artist did forcibly increase his own cultivation level by a whole tier, he would indeed be unable to control such terrifying power, because such an upgrade was too enormous.

But he was different. In his last life, his cultivation level had been of Heaven Tier, so what could a mere fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier count as?

Ling Han waved his sword in a powerful barrage of attacks, his Sword Qi seeming like rainbows, completely dominating Cheng Ji Yu.

The fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier against the first layer, that was going to be a one-sided battle in the first place.

"Peng," Ling Han raised his foot and aimed a kick at Cheng Ji Yu's chest. "Ka, ka, ka," the sound of bones breaking and fracturing was heard. At least four of Cheng Ji Yu's ribs had broken, and his Dantian was completely shattered as his body slid to right in front of Ling Dong Xing.

"Kneel!" Ling Han commanded coldly.

"Nonsense!" Cheng Ji Yu shouted furiously. Even if he was killed, he would never lower his head in front of his enemy.

"You have no choice!" Ling Han waved his sword. "Pu, pu," two splatters of blood appeared, and Cheng Ji Yu's foot tendons had been torn, and he could not help his legs from bending as he knelt down in front of Ling Dong Xing.

"Little beast, even if I become a ghost, I will not spare you!" Cheng Ji Yu spat out blood. He knew that he would definitely die today, so he did not even think of begging for mercy. His eyes were sharp as daggers as he wanted nothing more than to stab Ling Han to death with his eyes alone.

"Father, this person is yours!" Ling Han calmed himself. He knew that Ling Dong Xing wanted even more to kill this enemy with his

own hands.

"All right!" Ling Dong Xing's face was filled with killing intent. He recalled how his clansmen were killed right in front of his very eyes, as if they were mere animals to be slaughtered. Their blood had painted the whole Ling Clan Residence red, and their bodies lay everywhere. His eyes instantly turned red, and taking the sword that Ling Han handed over to him, he immediately struck with a stab.

"Pu!"

The sharp sword stabbed right into his chest, and Cheng Ji Yu glared at Ling Dong Xing with utmost unwillingness. His mouth opened and closed a few times, as if he wanted to say something, but only blood gurgled out of his mouth, his head slanted to one side, and he was dead.

Ling Dong Xing gave a kick to the body of Cheng Ji Yu and the corpse flew some distance away. He raised his face to the skies and released an enraged roar. From today onwards, there would be no more Cheng Clan in Gray Cloud Town!

Chapter 86: Liu Yu Tong Breaks Through

Under the siege and assault of so many different parties, how could the Cheng Clan resist? They were instantly wiped out!

Perhaps there may be a few who have fortunately escaped, but with Ling Han's current status in Da Yuan City, the survivors of the Cheng Clan would be ultimately detested by all. They'd have to keep running and hiding, or they'd definitely be apprehended and delivered straight to the Ling Clan.

...Who did not want to befriend Ling Han?

There were not many members of the previously flourishing Ling Clan who survived. Thus, Qi Yong Ye and the others did not leave immediately after eliminating the Cheng Clan. They left behind their people to assist the Ling Clan in taking control of the situation. But after such a battle, most likely no other party within the jurisdiction of the Da Yuan City would dare to make an enemy of the Ling Clan. Previously, more than one hundred different parties of varying power and might came to Ling Han's aid, so who would not be terrified of seeing a repeat of this scene?

All the properties of the Cheng Clan naturally fell into the ownership of the Ling Clan. However, because the Cheng Clan had long been forced into economically dire straits, they were actually almost destitute. However, their minerals still existed, and so did their shop lots. With proper management, these properties would definitely be able to generate a massive income for the Ling Clan.

After staying at the Ling Clan Residence for about a day, Qi Yong Ye and the others excused themselves and departed. They were about to set off towards Hu Yang Academy, and since Ling Han would be going to the same place very soon, they did not depart with heavy hearts. After all, they'd be able to see each other again in a few days' time.

Meanwhile, Liu Yu Tong entered seclusion in preparation to

break through to Gushing Spring Tier, for she felt that she was really too useless. At a time when Ling Han needed his little female attendant the most, she couldn't even do anything to help him, causing her to feel very dissatisfied with her current ability.

Thus, as soon as the danger was over, she immediately began the process of breaking through.

Ling Han also needed to stay for a while longer to help take care of some of the clan matters, so he decided to wait until Liu Yu Tong had broken through to Gushing Spring Tier before taking Ling Zi Xuan and Hu Niu with them to Hu Yang Academy.

The first item on the agenda was naturally the funerals of the clansmen of the Ling Clan.

Too many people had died; merely the funerals alone took seven days. Moreover, because too many of their clansmen had died, there was a need to replenish their manpower by a massive amount, or it would not be possible to manage so many different properties.

Ling Han was not of much help. He was an expert in alchemy and martial arts, but in such matters, he was completely inexperienced. Thankfully, Qi Yong Ye and the others left behind many of their own people to assist, and had promised that they would wait until the Ling Clan recovered before calling those people back.

In the meantime, Chen Feng Lie came once, bringing some news to Ling Han: Chen Peng Ju had indeed had a slip of the tongue after drinking too much, and the incident of Hang Zhan's murder was known by someone else. That person, after much hesitation, finally decided to go to Stone Wolf Sect to tell this secret so that he'd be able to gain some benefits.

Who knew that he actually encountered Chen Feng Lie, and after Chen Feng Lie discovered the whole story, he immediately killed the man to keep him from divulging the secret.

Chen Feng Lie had come deliberately to express his good faith.

The current Chen Feng Lie no longer dared to have any thoughts of betraying Ling Han—how many parties stood behind Ling Han? Unless Chen Feng Lie had lost his senses, otherwise he would not dare to make trouble. Thus, Ling Han gave him the complete medicine formula to resolve his state of madness as a reward.

On the ninth day, an extremely powerful wave of power swept out from the inner courtyard of the Ling Clan Residence, and the terrifying pressure caused many elite martial artists of Gushing Spring Tier to feel as if their hearts and souls were pounding.

Liu Yu Tong had broken through!

Ling Han had been sitting in the middle of the courtyard in the midst of cultivation when a shapely figure flew towards him before stopping at his side. It was Liu Yu Tong.

"Not bad, eight days and you've broken through, your talent is truly not bad!" Ling Han smiled and nodded. Though he had previously given Liu Yu Tong much valuable experience in battle, but to be able to break through completely within a mere eight days, Liu Yu Tong's talent in the field of martial arts was indeed extremely high.

Liu Yu Tong nodded, and in a firm voice, she said, "In the future, I will definitely not become your burden. Instead, I will be a helper you can depend on!"

"Haha, I believe you," Ling Han said with a laugh. After some thought, he said, "Since you've broken through to Gushing Spring Tier, then I'll teach you the third level of cultivation technique of the Three Yin Mysterious Arts. Once you've mastered that, you will never need to worry about falling unconscious again."

"En!" Liu Yu Tong nodded, appearing slightly excited; this was a Heaven Grade cultivation technique, and for a martial arts maniac like herself, it was an irresistible temptation.

The two of them returned to the inner chambers, and Ling Han naturally again underwent a test of his own while he had been guiding her in the cultivation technique, causing his emotions to ripple continuously.

This young girl was indeed a demon.

After much difficulty, he finally finished guiding her in the cultivation technique. Ling Han once again stepped out and continued to sit cross-legged in the courtyard.

Previously, the black tower allowed him to temporarily obtain the power of Gushing Spring Tier, but it only lasted for one hour. And the next time he wanted to make use of the power of the black tower again, he would have to wait until he has successfully broken through to Gushing Spring Tier.

However, when he has finally broken through to Gushing Spring Tier, he'd be able to gain a preliminary understanding of the secrets behind the black tower. He had no idea what kind of surprises awaited him then.

Additionally, Ling Han had also achieved the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier by now.

The reason why he had been able to break through so quickly had been because after the blessing of the black tower had been used up, though the power he gained very quickly disappeared, it seemed as if a small portion of it had been left within his body. After a few days of "digestion", this power now belonged completely to him alone.

Initially, he had only required about a month to complete accumulating enough energy to break through to the next layer, but now that he had obtained such benefits, naturally everything went smoothly, and as to be expected, he had successfully broken through.

With the stimulation of the Five Elements Origin Nuclei, his

power would soar to the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier. If he fought with Qi Yong Ye again now, he should be able to achieve an absolute victory.

"My current battle prowess should be about fourteen Stars, right?" Ling Han mumbled to himself.

In the field of martial arts, there were many geniuses who could disregard the gap between their own cultivation level and their opponent to challenge someone much stronger than them. Their actual battle prowess did not correspond to their actual cultivation level, and so cultivation level was completely unable to measure the battle prowess of a genius. As a result, the world of martial arts possessed a different way to measure battle prowess, named as Battle Stars.

For example, if a genius whose actual cultivation level was only fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier was able to battle evenly with an opponent of the sixth layer of Element Gathering Tier, his battle prowess would be six Stars.

'En, within the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, Li Dong Yue's battle prowess was the weakest, so he only had ten Stars. Jin Wuji should have eleven Stars, and Qi Yong Ye, due to using the Son of Heaven Fist Technique together with three flashes of Fist Qi, should be able to reach thirteen Stars,' Ling Han thought.

However, there were too many variables that could affect battle prowess. For example, if Baili Teng Yun wielded the Staff of Destruction, his battle prowess would be enough to soar to eleven Stars, but without this staff, his battle prowess would only be about nine Stars. He wouldn't even be able to match Li Dong Yue.

Some people were the emotional type. Under great rage, or after drinking too much, their battle prowess would shoot up.

As a result, while cultivation levels did not change, Battle Stars were a variable. Only a real-time situation would be able to reveal how many Stars would someone reach at their best.

'In my last life, although my cultivation level was the peak period of Heaven Tier, my battle prowess should be only about nine Stars, or ten Stars at most. I wonder what level could those freaks have reached?'

Ling Han shook his head. In his last life, he had spent his time either continuously concocting alchemical pills, or secluding himself to break through to the next cultivation level. Even when he had reached the highest he could go in terms of cultivation level, he still did not seek out the other six powerful warriors of Heaven Tier for a serious spar. When he recalled that, he could not help feeling a bit regretful.

And it was at this moment that the sound of a commotion was heard from outside. It quickly transmitted over to the inner court where he was, and became closer and closer. "Peng," after only a short while, the commotion had spread to this courtyard—the door was heavily kicked open, and a tall, slender young man entered.

This person had an imposing appearance. He was dressed in embroidered clothing, a sword hanging from his waist. His expression was one of extreme arrogance, as if he wanted nothing more than to have his nostrils facing the heavens, making it seem as if coming here had been an exercise of utmost humility for him.

Behind him followed a group of servants of the Ling Clan. They were all underlings Qi Yong Ye and the others had left behind to serve Ling Han. All of them were covered in dirt, as if they had just been beaten up. Some even had their arms broken.

This one had not come with good intentions!

Chapter 87: Hu Bo

This young man was... in Gushing Spring Tier!

Ling Han's eyes narrowed. This person appeared to be only about twenty three or twenty four years old, yet he had already stepped into Gushing Spring Tier, and had even reached the peak period of the first layer. In Rain Country, this kind of person would definitely be considered a genius.

Could this be Feng Yan?

In the area of Da Yuan City's control, if you were to ask what enemies he had, then it could only be Feng Luo, who had suffered losses twice by his hand; could that guy have asked his brother to come back?

No, according to rumors, Feng Yan was already in the third layer of Gushing Spring Tier! However, this person was really too tyrannical. He had obviously forced his way here, and when someone dared to stop him, he actually acted to wound them.

"Young Master Han, this person said he wanted to see Miss Liu, and forced his way through. Some of us tried to stop him, yet were killed by him in their attempt!" One of the attendants following behind this young man immediately said to Ling Han, his face filled with grief.

Ling Han could not help his anger from rising. Barging his way through was already arrogant enough—he actually dared to kill? This guy, just because he was in Gushing Spring Tier, was actually lawless to such a point?

"Go, I command you to invite Yu Tong out here!" This young man said to Ling Han as if he were ordering around a servant.

Ling Han looked at him, and said in a deep voice, "You killed my people!"

"So what? They are only lowly dogs, so what if a thousand or ten

thousand die?" The young man said indifferently, instantly causing the others to be filled with righteous indignation, wanting nothing more than to kill this guy a hundred times if they could with their sharp gazes alone.

Ling Han gave a humpf, and said, "In my eyes, you're lower than even a dog!"

The young man was stunned for a moment before laughing loudly, and said, "A mere martial artist in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and you actually dare to insult me? Hahahaha, you probably don't know who I, Hu Bo, am, right?"

"I don't care who you are!" Ling Han had already leaped forwards, and with a 'ding', his sword had left its sheath. The sword flew forward, as quick as lightning.

"How dare you!" The young man who had proclaimed himself Hu Bo instantly revealed a furious expression. His right hand opened up and Origin Power formed a golden palm, intending to grab hold of Ling Han's sword.

Ling Han's right hand moved, and five flashes of Sword Qi appeared together.

"Shua, shua, shua, shua, shua," six sword images slashed as one, and the large hand formed from Origin Power was instantly sliced into pieces. Ling Han pushed forward, his sword aiming directly for Hu Bo's throat.

"Five flashes of Sword Qi?" Hu Bo could not help releasing a surprised gasp. He once again struck forward with a palm, and another large hand of Origin Power blasted forward, halting Ling Han's further advance.

He could not help a cold smile turning up the corners of his lips, and said, "I never thought that a tiny place like Gray Cloud Town could actually produce a genius that managed to form five flashes of Sword Qi. Moreover, you are obviously only in the fifth layer of

Element Gathering Tier, yet the prowess you've shown can be compared to the ninth layer. You should have about thirteen Battle Stars, right?"

'What Battle Stars?' Those people who had followed in were all at a loss. They had never heard such a phrase before.

"Heng, but in front of me, no matter how many Battle Stars you have, it is completely useless!" Hu Bo shook his head, "The gap between cultivation levels is too big. If I did fight with my full power, I'd be able to kill you in one move!" He paused for a moment, then said, "I treasure talent, so I will give you an opportunity to live. As long as you become my underling, I not only will spare you, I'll even be able to give you ultimate godly techniques!"

If Liu Yu Tong had been able to hear this, she'd definitely laugh her head off!

Who was Ling Han?

Someone who could casually take out a Heaven Grade cultivation technique! So, what kind of cultivation technique did you plan to give him that deserved to be called "ultimate godly techniques"?

"Kneel down and accept your death, and I can give you a swift end!" Ling Han replied back.

Hu Bo was enraged, and said, "Brat, being arrogant just because you're a little bit talented is not a good habit! Since you deliberately seek your own death, then let me help you!" This time, he made the first move. As his hands moved, his attacks swept out in waves, and his battle prowess had improved to a whole new level as compared to previously.

However, it was still only an increase of one Star! Of course, this Star was applicable only to Gushing Spring Tier.

Ling Han was not afraid. Indeed, his battle prowess was not able to reach the level of Gushing Spring Tier, but his defense was

awesome. The Body of Dead Tree allowed him to withstand tremendously powerful attacks repeatedly without suffering any injury, and the Indestructible Heaven Scroll allowed him to instantaneously recover whatever wounds he did suffer. It was enough to qualify him for this battle.

The two martial artists clashed, and flashes of Sword Qi soared to the heavens, Origin Power gushing all over the place.

"This can't be, Young Master Han was actually so powerful? He can actually fight on even grounds with a powerful warrior of Gushing Spring Tier!"

"What does this count as, didn't Young Master Han just slaughter one a few days ago?"

"But that old guy had just broken through, so he definitely couldn't have been as powerful as this one."

Murmurs rose up among the crowd, and they were all flabbergasted at Ling Han's might. He was undoubtedly only in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier, yet could actually fight on even grounds with a person in Gushing Spring Tier. This was practically unbelievable.

However, Gushing Spring Tier was still Gushing Spring Tier, after all. After a couple of exchanges of blows, blood not only stained the corners of Ling Han's mouth, the skin all over his body had also cracked, dripping blood. And this was because he had learnt the Body of Dead Tree ability. Otherwise, suffering such a bout of assault, even his bones would long have been shattered.

Facing such a scene, the others could only feel a deep sense of admiration and reverence. This was the gap of a whole tier, yet Ling Han could still manage to fight until such a point. If the two fighters had the same cultivation level, then Ling Han most likely would have been able to kill his opponent in one move.

Ling Han's condition was not as bad as it looked. With the

circulation of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll, the wounds that he had suffered were actually recovering very quickly. His battle prowess not only did not weaken, it became even stronger with the use of the Lone Wolf's Blood.

After such a long battle, he had also obtained a rough grasp of his opponent's attacks. Every secret behind his opponent's moves was practically revealed to him.

"Xiu," his sword suddenly shot forward and five flashes of Sword Qi moved unhindered, as if it was the writing brush of a god, aiming straight for Hu Bo's chest.

Hu Bo was extremely shocked. Although all of his moves had their own weaknesses, but how could they have been seen through by a mere martial artist of Element Gathering Tier? But that was exactly the truth of what happened—this slash from Ling Han aimed straight at his weak point, and was heading towards him!

In a moment of desperation, he could only raise his hands and place them in a block in front of his chest.

"Pu!"

A spurt of blood sprayed. A wound had appeared on his right palm, and blood was pouring from it.

The two fighters had been fighting so long, and finally Ling Han managed to score a hit on his opponent!

"Hua!"

The people around them exploded with shocked exclamations, obviously extremely excited.

Although Hu Bo had only suffered a single injury, and experienced a little bit of loss, but the crucial point was that he was in Gushing Spring Tier. A martial artist at the grand level of Gushing Spring Tier was actually successfully wounded by a martial artist in Element Gathering Tier. No matter where this happened, it would be seen as a feat of impressive heights!

Hu Bo's face was twisted into a malevolent expression. This stab had not harmed him much, and he had only bled a little, so it was not a serious injury. Yet his hatred for Ling Han had reached astronomical levels. A mere commoner from such a desolate place, and he actually dared to harm him, a member of one of the Eight Great Clans of the imperial city, the Seventh Young Master of the Hu Clan! If such a piece of news were to spread out, how would he be able to continue facing his circle of friends?

Additionally, wasn't this young man's talent too scary? If he really did grow to Gushing Spring Tier, how strong would he be?

He could not allow Ling Han to live!

Hu Bo had developed a serious intention to kill Ling Han. Previously, even if he had really meant to kill Ling Han, that was the same as a human being casually killing a bug. It was not something that would be considered seriously. But now he really intended to kill Ling Han and put his all into the effort!

He slowly drew his sword, and said, "You do have some ability, but this is as far as you can go!"

Because he was in Gushing Spring Tier, he was able to use Black Grade martial arts techniques!

Chapter 88: Becoming Enemies

Hu Bo's hand held his drawn sword. His status was a noble one; he was in the uppermost social class below the imperial family of Rain Country, yet had now actually suffered an injury from someone else. This had inflicted a heavy blow on his self-esteem, and there was no way his ego could accept such a thing happening, so his desire to erase this future ruler increased even further!

Five flashes of Sword Qi, that could be considered a strong enough existence among rulers.

"You will not be able to kill me today, nor will you be able to do so in the future—you will only die by my hand!" Ling Han said deeply. From the moment Hu Bo had committed murder within the grounds of the Ling Clan Residence, that already meant this man's fate was sealed; not even the gods would be able to change his fate!

Because this was a man he intended to kill.

"Hu Bo, what are you doing here?"

"Xiu," a figure flashed into the vicinity, and Liu Yu Tong had appeared.

She had been in the midst of analyzing the third level of cultivation technique from the Three Yin Mysterious Arts, but hearing the commotion outside becoming louder, she immediately realized that something was not right, and thus immediately leaped out. Her beautiful face was filled with anger, and because she saw that Ling Han was covered with blood, her heart could not help tightening as a powerful killing intent immediately rose to life within her.

Anyone who dared to injure Ling Han... they were all unforgivable!

However, this Hu Bo was the Seventh Young Master of the Hu

Clan, and was of the same social status as herself. Moreover, he was even stronger than her, so she could not act rashly, or she could possibly cause Ling Han's death! This was something she was even more unwilling to see.

"Yu Tong!" Hu Bo immediately restrained his killing intent, smiled and said, "Your trip this time took quite a few months. I was very worried about you, so I deliberately came over to escort you back!"

"I don't need you to meddle in my affairs!" Liu Yu Tong said coldly. She pointed at the door and said, "You can get lost now!"

"Yu Tong, it can't be that you've fallen in love with this brat, right?" Hu Bo's gaze swept over to Ling Han, uncontrollable jealousy brimming in them, "Then... this brat is definitely going to die!"

"You dare to take one more step?" Liu Yu Tong slanted her body to stand in front of Ling Han, an icy expression on her beautiful face.

"Heng, it can't be that you've really been captivated by him!" Hu Bo was about to be driven mad with rage. He and Liu Yu Tong were both members of the Eight Great Clans of the imperial city, and in order not to be pushed around easily by the imperial family, it was common for the Eight Great Clans to ally with each other through marriage.

After Liu Yu Tong was discovered to possess such powerful talent in the field of martial arts, the members of the other seven Great Clans all started brimming with desire to have her marry into their respective clans, and Hu Bo was one of her many admirers and pursuers. And, personally, he was very satisfied, because not only did Liu Yu Tong possess a terrifying talent in martial arts, she was also one of the Twin Stunning Pearls of the imperial city. What man would not want to marry her?

But he had never imagined that she had just stepped out for a

short while, and her heart and soul was captured by a wild brat!

A mere country bumpkin!

"I want to kill him! I want to kill this little bastard!" He roared with rage, and with one leap, pounced towards Ling Han.

"How dare you!" Liu Yu Tong stepped forward to parry. "Hong," the aura of Gushing Spring Tier exploded.

"Yi!" Hu Bo gasped in shock, a surprised expression on his face. "Gushing Spring Tier! You've broken through to Gushing Spring Tier!" There was no way he wouldn't be surprised. Although it was common knowledge that Liu Yu Tong was extremely talented in the field of martial arts, but no matter how talented she was, she should have only been able to break through to Gushing Spring Tier after she has passed twenty years old.

Moreover, a few months ago Liu Yu Tong had only been in the eighth layer of Element Gathering Tier, so theoretically, it would already have been difficult enough for her to reach the peak period of the ninth layer of Gushing Spring Tier by now. And to break through to Gushing Spring Tier.... she should at least have needed another one or two years to settle.

Though power could be forcibly increased with the aid of alchemical pills, it was impossible to fake one's aura. This was definitely the aura of Gushing Spring Tier, and from the feel of it, she had just broken through quite recently.

Genius, she really was a genius!

"Yu Tong, I've blamed you wrongly!" He quickly said.

Being able to break through to Gushing Spring Tier in such a short period of time, how could Liu Yu Tong have any spare time to "get into a romantic relationship"? She must have gotten some kind of fateful encounter here, and had been putting all her efforts into breaking through. This must be the reason why she had been staying here for such a long period of time.

"Get lost!" Liu Yu Tong ignored his words, her palms moved, and a terrifying offensive power rose up.

The symbol of Gushing Spring Tier was Origin Power given form. With the claps of her palms, one after another, giant hands of Origin Power were formed, flying towards Hu Bo.

And because Hu Bo felt that he was "in the wrong", he did not dare to parry her attacks. He only kept dodging while pleading for mercy. But because he was at the peak period of the first layer of Gushing Spring Tier, he was much more powerful than Liu Yu Tong. Moreover, Liu Yu Tong had just broken through, so there was no way she would be used to using the increased power that she possessed now, and he very easily dodged her attacks.

And more importantly, though Gushing Spring Tier allowed the martial artist to learn Black Grade martial arts techniques; Liu Yu Tong had just broken through, so how would she have had the time to cultivate any? So she was even less of a threat to Hu Bo.

"Yu Tong, calm down. I'll leave, alright? When you return to the imperial city, I'll look for you again!" Hu Bo retreated, but before he left, he gave a cold glare to Ling Han and said, "Brat, don't think that just because you're close to her, you're favored! Yu Tong is not someone you can have delusions about. If you dare, I will definitely tear you to pieces!"

Without waiting for Liu Yu Tong's reaction, his figure took a great leap, and he had already disappeared to a far off distance.

Liu Yu Tong chased after him for a few steps but then gave up. Hu Bo was much faster than her.

"I'm sorry!" She raced back to Ling Han's side and said with deep remorse. Hu Bo had come to the Ling Clan Residence and killed so many people, yet she was unable to apprehend him.

"You don't have to apologize, that guy belongs to me!" Ling Han humped coldly. The current him indeed did not yet possess the

ability to kill Hu Bo, but it would definitely not be too much of a wait.

Liu Yu Tong knew that Ling Han was a man who kept his word, so she quickly said, "The Hu Clan is one of the Eight Great Clans of the imperial city, and their power is at the same level as our Liu Clan. They also possess a powerful warrior of Spiritual Pedestal Tier as support. You definitely must not act rashly."

Ling Han had already guessed that Hu Bo must have an exceptionally high social status. Otherwise, he would not have been qualified to pursue Liu Yu Tong. He nodded, and said, "Am I the rash type of person?"

Liu Yu Tong could not help but observe a moment of silence in tribute of the Hu Clan. Although Ling Han was currently only in Element Gathering Tier, his talent in martial arts was higher than her own by a hundredfold. And together with his achievements in the field of alchemy, the Hu Clan have gained a powerful enemy this time.

Though there were still a thousand things left to do at the Ling Clan, Ling Dong Xing still forced Ling Han out of the Ling Clan Residence, commanding him to immediately set off to report at the Hu Yang Academy.

After a moment of consideration, Ling Han realized that his staying here wouldn't help anything anyways, so he might as well set out.

He and Liu Yu Tong brought Ling Zi Xuan and Hu Niu with them. However, because Ling Zi Xuan's parents had both died in the great slaughter previously, Ling Han still had to look for someone to take care of these two little girls after they had reached the imperial city.

Now, Hu Niu had slowly gotten accustomed to eating cooked meat, but she was still only interested in eating meat. She wouldn't even touch any kind of vegetable. But she was now exceptionally

clingy towards Ling Han. Whenever there was time, she would lean against him like a kitten, resting her little head on his knee.

Don't think that she had put away her wild nature though, because to other people, she was still extremely ferocious. But because of Ling Han, she had also become slightly closer to Liu Yu Tong and Ling Zi Xuan. Or at least, she would not try to bite the two of them anymore.

And, Ling Han realized to his extreme shock that this wild little girl never seemed to be able to get full. No matter how much food they gave her, she would be able to easily consume it all. And after she had eaten some demonic beast meat, there actually appeared a spike in her cultivation level, and she quickly stepped into the fourth layer of Body Refining Tier.

...She had obviously not awakened her Spirit Base yet, and she had never learnt any kind of cultivation technique before!

This caused Ling Han a great shock.

Power would not simply appear without reason. For example, the Origin Power within the body of a martial artist had come from refining the Spiritual Qi around him. And Hu Niu did not practice any kind of cultivation, so her power had obviously not come through this channel.

Then, it must have come from the food that she had eaten.

Could this little girl be able to directly refine the food she ate into her own Origin Power?

When this deduction arose in his mind, Ling Han could not help feeling astonished. What kind of terrifying ability was that?

In order to prove the truth of this deduction, Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong kept hunting down demonic beasts for Hu Niu to eat her fill.

Indeed, the more she ate, the faster her power grew. But there was a limit to it, because her stomach was not a bottomless pit

after all. By the time the four of them reached the imperial city, Hu Niu was shockingly already in the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier.

This was not as terrifying as Ling Han's own pace of cultivation, but it was enough of a great shock, because even now, she had not yet awakened her Spirit Base!

Ling Han had a feeling that he had picked up a valuable treasure.

Chapter 89: Old Demon

After so many days, Hu Niu finally managed to learn a few words somehow. The word that she spoke the most was "meat", and then it was "kill", and also "Ling Han". She only managed to learn these three phrases, which brought the total of her vocabulary up to only four words.

But, at least she now knew that "Hu Niu" was her name, and would raise her head in response when she heard it.

She still did not like to walk on two legs, but Ling Han had a large influence on her, causing her to unknowingly imitate his actions. By the time the four of them reached the imperial city, the wild little girl finally got used to walking on her legs. But when there was no one else, she would still be walking around on all fours. And she was extremely fast, as if she was a fierce tiger that had finally escaped its cage.

Her dislike for wearing clothes did not change though. A new suit of clothes, after only a mere few days, would be torn to shreds by her hands, causing Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong to feel very exasperated—though Ling Zi Xuan was extremely envious of this, because Hu Niu would be able to frequently get new clothes.

Entering the city actually required an entrance fee of a silver coin. Since there were four of them, they had to pay four silver coins. Though this was a paltry sum to Ling Han, but taking into consideration how many travelers entered and exited this city every day, the money that came merely from collecting entrance fees would definitely be an incredible wealth.

It was indeed a good life being the Emperor. I built this road, so if you want to enter, you'll have to pay. It was completely fair.

After the four of them entered the city, it happened to be noon, so they decided to find some place to have lunch first before going to report at the Hu Yang Academy.

"Meat! Meat! Meat!" Hu Niu sat down very earnestly, drool already starting to drip from her mouth.

Ling Han did not look at the menu, and simply said to the waiter, "Just serve whatever's good, but there must be a lot of meat!"

"All right!" The waiter replied before leaving.

There were not many customers in the restaurant in the beginning, but as dish after dish of delicious food was served to their table, it was also soon nearing the time when majority of people would be having their meals. The number of customers in the restaurant gradually increased, making the atmosphere increasingly livelier.

Hu Niu did not bother with using any chopsticks. She would simply reach out and grab onto a whole chicken or duck, and within a few moments, she would have completely devoured it. She really had a terrifyingly good appetite.

"Aren't you scared of getting your hands dirty!" Ling Han shook his head. He had taught her who knew how many times, yet this wild little girl kept resenting the use of chopsticks because they were too troublesome to use.

Hu Niu only gave a giggle in response before continuing to devour the food in front of her.

Compared to her, Ling Zi Xuan was much more refined. She would only take small bites, and when she smiled, there would be no sign of her teeth. She had already learnt the basic demeanor of a daughter from a noble house.

"What a good-looking young girl," an elderly voice was heard, causing both Ling Han and Liu Yu Tong to turn their heads to look at the speaker.

It was an old man who seemed to be in his sixties. He was dressed in rich robes, and out of the ten fingers on his hands, there were rings on eight of them. He was obviously extremely wealthy. His

eyes were focused entirely on Hu Niu and Ling Zi Xuan. His stare was so intense that it seemed as if light could be seen from his eyes alone.

"Are the two of you the parents of these two little girls?" The old man asked as he walked over, but he immediately introduced himself afterward, "I am Chen Yun Xiang, the shopkeeper of the Four Seas Business. I am quite well-known."

Liu Yu Tong shook her head, while Ling Han glanced a moment at this Chen Yun Xiang, and said, "We are not their parents, just their relatives."

Ling Zi Xuan very obediently smiled at the old man, and addressed him as Grandpa, while Hu Niu only continued to think about eating. In her eyes, nothing was more important than eating meat.

Chen Yun Xiang seemed as if he liked these two little girls very much. He continued to babble on, causing Ling Zi Xuan to break out continuously in laughter, while Hu Niu acted as if she hadn't heard him speak at all.

At first, Ling Han only thought that this old man was especially fond of children, and so did not think too much about it. But the old man's gaze became increasingly odd, as if he was a wolf that had focused its eyes on two lambs. His eyes were so verdant that they were almost lit up, and Ling Han finally realized that they had encountered an old lecher, and this old lecher's favorite target was little girls. [ED/N: Dunno how his eyes were green, but that's what the raws say... probably reference to how wolves' eyes supposedly glow green in the dark]

"Come, let Grandpa take a look at your palm lines!" Chen Yun Xiang could not hold himself back from stretching out a hand to catch hold of Ling Zi Xuan's little hand, revealing his true colors of a lecherous molester.

"Pa!"

Ling Han reached out and caught hold of the old man's wrist, his gaze severe as he said, "Old guy, you're already so old, and yet you're still unwilling to behave?"

Chen Yun Xiang was not a martial artist, and as he was gripped by Ling Han's hand, he suddenly wailed from the pain of such a tight grasp. He only stopped when Ling Han flung him away, causing him to stumble and fall onto the ground. Raising his hand for a look, there shockingly appeared four finger marks on his wrist. They were so green that it looked like they were going to darken into a bruise soon.

His expression had also darkened as he gained a new fear in his heart for Ling Han, yet he was unwilling to simply give up two such pretty, cute little girls. Thus, he said, "They're not your daughters anyways, why don't you just name a price!"

A spark of killing intent flashed across Ling Han's expression, and he said, "Old lecher, if you dare say another word, I'll kill you!"

Chen Yun Xiang was about to continue increasing his offer and try to convince Ling Han, but when he saw the killing intent on Ling Han's face, he could not help his heart shuddering; he no longer dared to continue making an issue out of it. He quickly turned the opposite direction and fled.

However, he would not give up so easily as he thought, 'Heng, you don't know what's good for you. Then I'll just ask the people of the Earth and Water Faction for help and snatch these two little girls from you!'

The old man staggered as he left, instantly causing the other customers in the restaurant to break out into raucous laughter.

"Brother, that old guy is a famous lecher, and his main target are little girls. If it was not for the fact that he had always used money to get what he wants, who knows how many times he'd have already been beaten to death," one of the customers who recognized that old lecher said with a shake of his head.

Ling Han did not take it too seriously though. The old man was not a martial artist, so his social circle could only include ordinary people; his ability was naturally limited. If Chen Yun Xiang had continued to persist, not knowing what was good for him, Ling Han would definitely not have been merciful.

Hu Niu was very fast at eating her meat, as if she was afraid that someone would be fighting with her over it. By the time Ling Han and the others had all eaten their fill, she was still eating, and her speed had not slowed one bit.

Seeing this scene caused the customers in the restaurant much amazement. They couldn't understand how the tiny stomach of this little girl was able to accommodate so much food.

Finally, a bit over two o'clock, the little girl finally patted her stomach a few times with satisfaction. She squirmed into Ling Han's embrace, and very soon began to snore.

She could eat a lot and sleep a lot.

Ling Han stood up to pay the bill. Over one thousand silver coins had been spent on this one meal—at least ninety percent of it was in Hu Niu's stomach, proving how much of a spendthrift this little girl was. Thankfully, because Ling Han had killed Hang Zhan, Ma Lang, and the others previously, there was no lack of money in his pocket.

The four of them exited the restaurant and continued their journey to Hu Yang Academy.

"There are two people who've been following us," Liu Yu Tong said to Ling Han, after they had walked for a while.

Ling Han nodded, and said, "I noticed. But I don't know if their target is our money... or us!"

If their target was them.... a ferocious light flashed through his eyes. Without doubt, it was definitely the antics of that old lecher, Chen Yun Xiang... if that really was so, then don't blame him for

being merciless.

"They're coming!" Liu Yu Tong said softly. At the moment, the two of them had just walked into a remote little alley, with not one other person around them. This was of course what Ling Han had deliberately done.

Two sturdy men quickly ran towards them. When they reached Ling Han, one of them tried to carry off Ling Zi Xuan, while the other reached out towards Ling Han, intending to snatch away Hu Niu who was still sleeping in his arms.

These two sturdy men were not martial artists. They were only a bit stronger than normal people. After all, out of every ten people, there would only be one that possessed a Spirit Base, so martial artists weren't really that common.

Ling Han smiled. He not only did not resist, he even raised his arms a bit, allowing the man to easily snatch Hu Niu away from his hold.

The man could not help being stunned for a moment. Such a reaction was something that he had never even considered would happen.

Meanwhile, due to the movement, Hu Niu was awakened. She was like a wild beast, and possessed a very alert nature. When she discovered that she was held by an unfamiliar man, a ferocious light immediately shone in her eyes.

Chapter 90: Unwilling to Give up His Evil Intentions

Though Hu Niu had yet to awaken her Spirit Base, she had already stepped into the sixth layer of Body Refining Tier because of her continuous eating.

What kind of concept was that?

Ordinary adult men, even if there were twenty or thirty of them working together, could not possibly be able to match her!

Discovering that she was in the hold of an unfamiliar man, Hu Niu's ferocious nature instantly flared up. "Pa," like a tiger waving its paw, her hand connected with the large man's face.

"Pu," the large man's head slanted, and seven teeth as well as a mouthful of blood was instantly spat out; he immediately fell onto the ground.

Hu Niu somersaulted in midair and landed steadily in a crouch on the ground. Her mouth opened, revealing two canines. Her four limbs pushed off the ground at the same time, and like a fierce tiger that had finally escaped its confines, she pounced at the large man. Her hands pressed down on his shoulders, and her mouth was already lowering down in a bite at his throat.

Ling Han hurriedly acted and picked up the wild little girl. He definitely did not want this little girl to kill. If she had, then all his and Liu Yu Tong's efforts would have been wasted.

Even so, the large man that had been knocked down to the ground had already paled in fear. His throat released a shrill shriek. If they hadn't seen it or heard it themselves, it was really unbelievable that such a tall, sturdy man would actually be able to release such a sissy sound.

The other large man was more "fortunate". With a knife hand from Liu Yu Tong to his neck, he had instantly passed out.

"If you scream once more, I'll kill you!" Ling Han said.

The large man hurriedly covered his mouth with his hands, as if he was a young maiden that had encountered a pervert.

Ling Han placed Hu Niu back down. The wild little girl's ferocious nature was restrained with much difficulty, and she kept baring her teeth at the large man, giving out a low growl. The large man screamed again due to fear, but when he recalled Ling Han's threat, he hurriedly covered his mouth again.

"I, I am a disciple of the Earth and Water Faction. If you know what's good for you, you'll let me go immediately!" The large man threatened, though he did not look very confident. He was shuddering in fear even as he spoke, his face pale.

Ling Han turned to look at Liu Yu Tong and asked, "What's the background of this Earth and Water Faction?"

"It's an underground party of the imperial city. Because some things cannot be done publicly, even the Eight Great Clans would occasionally make use of the power of this party to do some dirty deeds," Liu Yu Tong said. She thought for a moment, then continued, "The Faction Chief of the Earth and Water Faction seems to be named Yang Tian Du. He's in the Spiritual Ocean Tier, and mingles very well with the upper class parties of the imperial city."

In the field of martial arts, the lines between Cult, Faction, Sect, Association and Society were very strictly drawn. To be able to possess the name of Faction would require a powerful warrior of Spiritual Ocean Tier as support.

Ling Han gave an 'oh' and once again looked back at that large man as he said, "I don't care if you're Earth and Water Faction or Heaven and Water Faction. I ask a question, and you give me an answer. If I'm not pleased with your answer, then I will sever one of your limbs. You can count how many times can you afford my displeasure yourself."

The large man's face paled and he hurriedly nodded without stopping. He was not really afraid of Ling Han—rather, he was afraid of Hu Niu. This little girl gave him the feeling that she was a fierce tiger, with absolutely no way to reason with her.

Who would not be afraid of that?

"Chen Yun Xiang sent you?" Ling Han asked.

"Yes, yes."

"How many times have you helped him do such deeds?"

"..." the large man hesitated for a moment, but when his eyes fell upon Hu Niu, he could not help shuddering. He hurriedly answered, "I can't remember exactly how many times, but there should definitely be ten times!"

There were actually as many as ten times!

Ling Han gave a humph and struck the large man's chest with his palm. Due to the shock wave from his Origin Power, he instantly crushed the man's heart.

To help a villain commit evil, they deserve more than death!

Liu Yu Tong had already developed a tacit understanding with him. She immediately struck forward with a stab of her sword and killed the man who had fallen unconscious. She then sheathed her sword and said, "Just leave that old fiend to me, I will have people from my clan deal with him."

Ling Han considered her words for a moment before nodding in agreement.

He knew that Liu Yu Tong was acting in his best interests. After all, this was the imperial city, under the direct jurisdiction of the Emperor. Even if it were the Eight Great Clans, they would have to think twice before doing something. If he killed someone right after he had arrived and this information that could be used against him was acquired by someone who intended him harm,

this could possibly result in the thunderous rage of the imperial family.

At that moment, not even Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan would be able to protect him. Rain Country belonged to the Qi Clan, after all.

However, as for these two little foot soldiers in front of them, even if they died, there would be no one to pay special attention to this matter. Chen Yun Xiang was the boss of a business, so his influence could either be small or large; for Liu Clan, as one of the Eight Great Clans, it'd only be too easy if they intended to deal with a businessman. Moreover, Chen Yun Xiang did not have a clean history, so just randomly collecting information on some of his bad deeds would be enough to ruin him completely.

Ling Han too had not taken such a minor character seriously, so he naturally would not reject Liu Yu Tong's kindness.

The two of them continued on their journey towards Hu Yang Academy.

The imperial city was extremely big. It was at least ten times the size of Da Yuan City, and after an hour, Ling Han and the others have finally arrived at the entrance to Hu Yang Academy.

They were immediately halted in their advance. This was not a place that anyone could simply enter.

"I am Liu Yu Tong!" Liu Yu Tong removed a silver plaque and handed it over to the four guards who were stationed at the entrance.

"So it is True Disciple Liu!" One of the guards closely examined the plaque, and quickly handed it back respectfully. "We did not know it was you, so please forgive us, True Disciple Liu!"

Liu Yu Tong waved off their apologies. She was currently veiled, so it was only logical that they did not recognize her. She pointed at Ling Han, and said, "This is my friend, and he needs to enter the

Academy for an important matter. Register him for me."

"Understood!" the four guards nodded.

Hu Yang Academy had very strict rules. Disciples of the Academy were indeed allowed to bring visitors into the grounds of the Academy, but the latter were not allowed to stay the night. Upon their entry, they would be registered, and if they had not exited the Academy by night, then the disciple who had brought them in would be severely punished.

After registering, Liu Yu Tong took Ling Han to a courtyard. This was where the teacher who was in charge of welcoming new disciples was stationed. Because the New Year had just passed, there was a huge group of new students that would be coming to report here.

After Liu Yu Tong had led Ling Han here, she then left with Ling Zi Xuan. The little girl had come here with the place of enrollment that Ling Dong Xing had gotten through his deal with the Academy, and so would not need to go through the ordinary channels of registration.

On the way here, Ling Han had heard about a lot of matters regarding the Hu Yang Academy from Liu Yu Tong.

Here, students were separated into three categories: Ordinary Disciples, True Disciples, and Core Disciples.

Ordinary Disciples were simple enough. You'd be considered one from the moment you enter the Academy. The True Disciples were much less in number, only thirty in total. In terms of cultivation resources, they could gain ten times the amount of resources available to Ordinary Disciples, so they were the object of envy for Ordinary Disciples.

There were two conditions for becoming a True Disciple. Firstly, you'd have to at least be in Element Gathering Tier, and secondly, you'd have to be in the top thirty strongest disciples of the

Academy. As a result, competition was extremely fierce.

However, Ling Han won the first place in this year's Da Yuan Tournament, so he would be instantly recognized as a True Disciple upon his entry—though this was only valid for one year. There were also the champions from thirty-six other cities who would be able to obtain such a reward, which meant that by the end of the year, thirty-six people would have to be disqualified, and after that, the True Disciples that were ranked from the twenty-first place to the thirtieth place would have to face challenges from the ten strongest Ordinary Disciples. If they lost, they'd be demoted back to being Ordinary Disciples.

This was also why Qi Yong Ye and Jin Wuji had returned to compete for the first place in the Da Yuan Tournament. Because even as strong as they were, they were still not True Disciples!

Chapter 91: Entering the Academy

However, Liu Yu Tong was a True Disciple.

She was not as strong as Qi Yong Ye, so why?

Because she was the princess of the Liu Clan. So, for one, the Academy definitely had to give some face to the Liu Clan, and for another, at the tournament at the end of the year, she'd still be able to obtain a valuable treasure from her clan to drastically increase her battle prowess for a short time, thus allowing her to easily keep her position as a True Disciple.

Of course, each Great Clan could open this kind of back door only once, and guarantee the entry of only one of their clansmen into the Academy. All other clansmen could only depend on themselves to fight for their own place in this Academy.

Above True Disciples, there were three Core Disciples.

The Core Disciples were people the Academy would put its full efforts into developing because they were the strongest among the younger generation of Rain Country. They represented the future level of martial arts of the whole of Rain Country, and were the face of the entire nation.

To become a Core Disciple, the prowess of Gushing Spring Tier was necessary. A few hundred years ago, one of the strongest ever Core Disciples had even reached Spiritual Ocean Tier!

However, upon reaching thirty years old, everyone would have to leave the Academy, because thirty years old was considered as the age of maturity, and anyone above this age would be considered a full adult.

One of the current Core Disciples was Qi Feng Yun, the Third Imperial Prince of Rain Country. He was not only extremely talented, he was also someone that the imperial family of Rain Country as well as Hu Yang Academy had concentrated their

efforts on developing, so naturally, he was extremely powerful.

He was currently twenty-seven years old, yet had already reached the seventh layer of Gushing Spring Tier. He was the strongest disciple of Hu Yang Academy, and was also nicknamed as the Strongest Son of Heaven of Rain Country.

The second person was Zhao Huan, who was a member of the Zhao Clan, one of the Eight Great Clans. According to the rumors, when he was born, a strange phenomenon was witnessed. A golden light lit up half the imperial city, and he was almost killed by the secret powers of the imperial family, because he was considered a potential threat to the imperial throne that belonged to the Qi Clan.

Thankfully, the Emperor was a wise man, and he not only did not do anything to harm Zhao Huan, he had even bestowed Zhao Huan with the title of Marquis of the Golden Sky—to be granted nobility status upon birth, that was the first time this kind of event happened in the history of Rain Country. And Zhao Huan, after awakening his Spirit Base, indeed displayed a terrifying talent in the field of martial arts. Currently, Zhao Huan was twenty-three years old, and he was in the fifth layer of Gushing Spring Tier, so in truth, he was not inferior in any way to Qi Feng Yun.

The third person was called Can Ye. He did not have a surname, and according to rumors, he was an orphan. He had been picked up the Headmaster of the Hu Yang Academy from the street, and since he was a child, he had been missing his right arm.

In the field of martial arts, losing the right arm was practically a sentence of death, and there would no longer be any future for this kind of person. Yet Can Ye still managed to become a Core Disciple, proving how terrifying his natural talent was.

Can Ye, twenty-two years old, third layer of Gushing Spring Tier. He was also rumored to have battle prowess that could soar up to seven Stars, and was someone that even Zhao Huan would have

misgivings about going up against.

'Interesting!' While Ling Han was waiting for the teacher who was responsible for receiving the new students, he kept thinking thus. He did not think too deeply about Qi Feng Yun and Zhao Huan, but this Can Ye did engender some of his intrigue.

Could this Can Ye also be a genius who possessed a Heaven Grade Spirit Base?

Otherwise, how could his advance up the ranks be so swift and he himself so powerful?

"Hey, are you a new student?" The teacher in charge of enrollment finally walked over. He looked at Ling Han a bit oddly, because he had never seen anyone coming to report carrying a little girl.

"That's right!" Ling Han drew out the proof showing that he had exited from Da Yuan City and handed it over to the teacher. The teacher in charge of enrollment was an elite in the fifth layer of Gushing Spring Tier, and definitely not someone to be underestimated.

The teacher received it from him, took a look, and could not help showing a surprised expression. He blurted out, "You're Ling Han?"

Ling Han scratched his head, and asked, "Am I very well-known?"

"Hahahaha, you, with the mere prowess of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, managed to defeat an opponent of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and that opponent happened to be Qi Yong Ye, whose battle prowess is not in any way weak. Such talent, tsk, tsk. The Headmaster has already said to immediately bring you to see him when you're here to report!" The teacher said. Suddenly, he stared blankly and gasped in astonishment, "You, you've already broken through to the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier!"

He was at first shocked, but then thought that Ling Han must have long since reached the peak period of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and after so many days, this guy thus smoothly soared to the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

When he thought about it this way, the shock level lessened by quite a large degree.

...If he found out that Ling Han had only been in the second layer of Body Refining Tier only a few months ago, his jaw would probably drop out of shock.

However, because of his exclamation, Hu Niu was instantly awakened. She was extremely displeased, and bared her teeth and growled at the teacher, displaying her ferocious nature.

"Come, I'll take you to see the Headmaster," the teacher beckoned his hand, waving Ling Han forward. Though Ling Han was still very weak now, with time, he may become the strongest Core Disciple of the Academy and show off the might of Rain Country.

Ling Han nodded and followed the teacher out, stepping onto a pathway in the Academy.

Very quickly, they arrived at a cluster of buildings. This was where the high-level officials resided. However, that Headmaster had not stayed in his own courtyard, so the teacher in charge of enrollment instructed him to wait for a moment while he himself would go to seek out that Headmaster who had gone who knows where.

Ling Han waited for a moment, but felt a bit bored, and so began to stroll around in the surrounding area.

'En?'

He suddenly picked up a very familiar smell, and he could not stop his feet from moving towards the source of that smell.

It was a very elegant courtyard. The door of the courtyard was ajar, and had not been closed.

Ling Han pushed open the door and entered, and very soon saw a young girl sitting cross-legged in the courtyard. Her hand was holding onto a very small alchemy furnace, and her whole right hand was erupting in flames.

She was concocting a... Storm Pill.

Storm Pill allowed a martial artist to increase his speed temporarily, like a storm blowing through. It was a very useful alchemical pill.

However, there was something wrong with this smell.

Ling Han wrinkled his nose and took a sniff. He instantly understood. One of the complementary drugs was wrong, and though this still allowed the Storm Pill to be successfully concocted, it would affect the success rate of forming the pill. It would also increase the chances of the furnace exploding.

He spoke up, "I advise you to stop immediately. Otherwise, within the time of three breaths, your alchemy furnace would definitely explode."

The girl completely ignored him. Now was the crucial time of concocting the Storm Pill, so how could she afford to be distracted? Merely by the second breath, "pa," the lid of the furnace was violently flung off, and some bits of junk sprayed out from within the furnace. Although she managed to dodge the majority of it, her face was still covered by a bit of it.

The furnace had exploded.

The girl finally raised her head to look at Ling Han, surprise filling her eyes. How had this guy known that the furnace would explode? You have to understand, with her level of control, there was absolutely no way that she would have been distracted by any external factors.

"The Scarlet Wolf Bone is one of the most likely ingredients that would cause a furnace to explode. Especially if it is used in the

concoction of Storm Pill, it would affect the quality of the completed pill. I really don't know what kind of idiot came up with this!" Ling Han said, shaking his head.

"How dare you insult my Master!" The girl was suddenly enraged. With a flash, she had already leaped towards Ling Han. Her right hand formed a palm strike, flames winding around her hand as the heat caused the air around her hand to ripple.

Seventh layer of Element Gathering Tier.

Ling Han had known her cultivation level with a single look, and from the looks of this palm strike, she had not even reached the battle prowess of seven Stars. Actually, this was quite normal. Alchemists would concentrate all their energy on pill concoction and alchemy, so where would they have gotten any spare time to spend on refining their martial arts?

This girl's cultivation level of seventh layer of Element Gathering Tier had probably been reached with the aid of alchemical pills, so it was only logical that her actual battle prowess was quite weak.

When she stood up, Ling Han had only at this moment realized to his surprise that this girl possessed a very tall, slender figure, and was about the same height as himself. Moreover, she had the charm of a deity, and was overwhelmingly beautiful, not the slightest bit inferior to Liu Yu Tong in terms of looks.

"Hehe, have I spoken wrongly?" Ling Han said as he dodged. Meanwhile, Hu Niu was crouching nearby, her face filled with excitement, wanting nothing more to pounce in and take a few bites of her own.

Chapter 92: The Real Storm Pill

The young girl gave a hump. She continued attacking, but said, "The pill formula for this Storm Pill was a damaged, incomplete one. My Master spent a considerable number of years and finally managed to complete the formula. Such a feat was an incredible contribution to the field of alchemy and you dare to insult my Master, so don't you think you deserve a beating?"

Eh, the Storm Pill too was lost in the passage of time?

Ling Han could not help frowning. What was going on here? Why had so many pill formulae from his time been lost? Reverse Pill, Storm Pill... Dark Moon Grass actually being used to concoct Purple Origin Pill, which was a spine-chillingly wasteful use of the Dark Moon Grass...

Logically, after ten thousand years, even if knowledge of alchemy had not improved much, it shouldn't have degraded to such a level, right?

He struck fiercely with a palm, forcing the girl away from him. He said with a smile, "If that's true, then your Master is indeed quite skilled. However, if I manage to concoct a better quality Storm Pill, then what are you going to do?"

"Impossible, how can you surpass my Master!" The girl did not believe him at all.

"Just let me give it a try. Worse comes to worst, we'll continue our fight later!" Ling Han said.

"Fine!" The girl agreed.

Ling Han grabbed the alchemy furnace that had been dropped on the ground, and said, "Prepare the ingredients for me!" He opened his mouth and in one breath recited a list of more than twenty different medicinal ingredients.

If it was someone else, they would definitely not be able to

remember all the ingredients. But since this young girl was an alchemist, she must definitely have a very powerful memory in this area. Very soon, she went into the room and returned with the ingredients Ling Han needed.

Ling Han sat down on the ground. His right hand held onto the alchemy furnace. "Hong," and flames instantly appeared upon his hand.

The girl's beautiful face revealed a sliver of displeasure. After all, when an alchemist was in the midst of concocting alchemical pills, they all kept up a solemn demeanor, and would usually seat themselves cross-legged on the ground. This was a kind of formality. Yet Ling Han had just simply sat on the ground in such a relaxed fashion. This was absolutely inappropriate.

But once she saw that Ling Han had began the process of pill concoction, she could only force back the admonishment that had come to her mouth. To disturb another whilst he was in the midst of pill concoction was one of the greatest taboos for alchemists, so naturally she would not deliberately violate this rule.

She was very much disdainful. One had to understand that although her Master did not belong to the Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, his level of achievement in alchemy was absolutely authentic. He was a Black Grade high level alchemist, and that was the same grade as the highest ranked official of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion in Rain Country. Her Master was currently the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department in Hu Yang Academy.

When there was mention of the name Wu Song Lin, what person would not respectfully address him as Grandmaster? Even the imperial family of Rain Country had to give her Master a modicum of respect.

This brat actually dared to call her Master an idiot. If this news was spread out, he'd definitely be beaten to death within three steps out of this courtyard.

Once Ling Han began the process of pill concoction, his demeanor immediately changed. There was an air similar to the air of a Great Master circulating around him.

His left hand moved very quickly, throwing medicinal ingredients into the furnace one after another. In the meantime, the furnace rotated continuously on his right hand. The flames were sometimes red, sometimes green, and sometimes white, transforming from one to the other color at a very rapid rate, seeming like a blur to any observer.

The girl's disdainful expression had rapidly disappeared, and a shocked expression revealed itself on her face instead.

Amateurs would only enjoy the show, while experts would enjoy the artfulness. Her name was Li Si Chan, and she herself was a genius of alchemy, which was why she had been taken as a disciple by Wu Song Lin. She was a very conceited person, but when she compared herself to Ling Han, she had to admit that Ling Han's movements were much more experienced and mature than her own. His movements were very natural and relaxed, as if he had been immersed in this field for a few hundred years and had reached the level where he could easily concoct pills even with his eyes closed.

Such an achievement, let alone her, even her Master was far inferior.

How could this be! How could this be!

Shouldn't this guy be a profligate Young Master? How was it that he had such frightening ability in the field of alchemy?

Within mere moments, the medicinal ingredients in front of Ling Han had all disappeared, and some sweat had appeared on his forehead. Storm Pill was a Yellow Grade mid level alchemical pill, after all. Furthermore, it was one of the more difficult to concoct types. He was able to concoct it now, but because his cultivation level was a bit too weak, it exerted much of his energy to do so.

"Yi, my good disciple, have you finally concocted the Storm Pill?" At this moment, a voice filled with surprise was heard from the doorway. A small, short old man walked in, all smiles and with a food container held in his hands.

There was another old man behind him. The two of them walked in together, and if one paid careful attention, they would be able to discover that there were three silver badges hanging on the chests of these two men.

Black Grade high level alchemists!

In the whole of Rain Country, there were only two Black Grade high level alchemists. One of them was the Pavilion Master of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, Fu Yuan Sheng, whereas the other was the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department of Hu Yang Academy, Wu Song Lin.

And they were these two men.

Wu Song Ling saw the girl was standing at one side, and his face was instantly filled with surprise. He had never thought that the person who was in the middle of concocting the pill was not his disciple.

"Yi?" Fu Yuan Sheng also revealed a shocked expression. He knew that Wu Song Lin had obtained a very good disciple who had managed to become a Yellow Grade mid level alchemist at the mere age of eighteen. Moreover, the Storm Pill was one of the more difficult to concoct pills among Yellow Grade mid level alchemical pills, and now it was actually being concocted by another youngster. Naturally, this was enough to surprise him.

It can't be that this Old Man Wu has gotten another genius of alchemy as a disciple, right? Damn it, why were all the talented people snatched away by him!?

Hu Niu had initially been extremely bored. She had lain down on the ground and had been sleeping, but after Wu Song Lin entered,

her nose immediately wrinkled, and she bounced up into a crouch. Her eyes fixed upon the food container in his hands, and suddenly, with a low growl, she scuttled forward and pounced towards the food container.

Ling Han's right hand rotated continuously. There actually appeared three different kinds of flames from between his five fingers at the same time—red, green, and white, which suddenly extinguished.

Three Fire Guide!

He had invented this in his last life, and this discovery brought upon a revolution in the field of alchemy. It not only would increase the quality of the completed pill, it could even recover a dead pill that could cause the alchemy furnace to explode.

Wu Song Lin and Fu Yuan Sheng were both flabbergasted. Their eyes were so wide that they were in danger of popping out of their skulls, and their mouths were wide open in shock. From the looks of it, they were extremely astonished and shocked. Meanwhile, Hu Niu took advantage of their distraction and snatched Wu Song Lin's food container away. She immediately opened it up, and began to enjoy the delicious contents.

"This... could this be the legendary long-lost Three Fire Guide?"

"To be able to produce three different flames at different temperatures, which would improve the effects of the completed pill drastically! It can even recover dead pills! This is the legend of legends, and I've always thought this was only a myth."

"It should not be the real one, probably just an imitation."

The two old men said, filled with astonishment.

"Hu!" Ling Han exhaled. He tossed the alchemy furnace to Li Si Chan, and said, "Fortunately, I've not disappointed your expectations. Take a look."

"Shua," the two old men simultaneously snatched at the furnace,

as if they were two kids fighting over a toy. They were both powerful warriors of Spiritual Pedestal Tier, so their actions were as fast as lightning, and only appeared to be a blur to observers.

Li Si Chan was dumbstruck. These two were the most respected and revered alchemists in the whole of Rain Country, and now they were actually behaving like two kids. How could she believe what her own eyes were telling her?

Finally, the two old men desisted at the same time. One of them held onto the furnace, while the other lifted the furnace lid and very carefully drew out a scarlet pill from within.

"This color, this aroma!"

"There's no mistake, this is the real Storm Pill!"

Wu Song Lin carved off a small slice, placed it into his mouth, and tasted it. He could not help the increasing degree of surprise and shock on his face, and said, "This is definitely the real Storm Pill, and moreover.... its effects have reached twelve Stars, no, thirteen Stars!"

"What!" Fu Yuan Sheng instantly leaped up in shock.

Chapter 93: Convinced

In the field of alchemy, if the quality of a completed pill reached the standard requirements, it would be graded as ten Stars. If the quality exceeded normal standards, it would be graded as eleven or twelve Stars. Normally, the quality would not exceed twelve Stars. If the quality of the completed pill was below normal standards, it would be given a grade from one to nine Stars, and any pill with less than one Star would be considered as junk, absolutely unusable.

"Hiss, even if I were concocting low grade alchemical pills, my best record was only twelve Stars!" Fu Yuan Sheng exclaimed in shock.

Li Si Chan's face was filled with absolute disbelief.

She could already be considered a genius of alchemy herself, or she would not have been taken in by Wu Song Lin as his personally taught disciple. Yet the majority of the completed pills that she has managed to concoct would be ten Stars, barely acceptable. A small portion of her completed pills would be nine Stars or eleven Stars.

Moreover, the Storm Pill could be considered to be one of the hardest to concoct pills among Yellow Grade mid level pills. Just take her as an example, she had already practiced concocting the Storm Pill for a month, yet every time, her efforts would only result in the furnace exploding. You can see how high the difficulty level of concocting this pill was.

Such a pill, as long as it was completed, it would be considered a success. Even if it was only graded three or four Stars, this kind of pill would still have a large market of customers willing to buy it. Thirteen Stars... that was the kind of pill over which people would go to war!

This guy really had not been bragging. He had really concocted the Storm Pill, and the quality of the completed pill was even

higher than Wu Song Lin's own—the Storm Pills that Wu Song Lin himself concocted were only graded at eight Stars, or his record best, nine Stars.

Could it be that her Master had really made a mistake?

"Young man! Young man!" Wu Song Lin's eyes were bright and shining. This expression had a close degree of similarity with Hu Niu. In an instant, he had scuttled over to Ling Han, held onto his hand and said, "Were you using the Three Fire Guide earlier?"

"En!" Ling Han nodded.

Wu Song Lin and Fu Yuan Sheng both sucked in a breath of cold air. This was something that had been considered a myth among myths!

What did a young man that knew how to use the Three Fire Guide signify?

"Young man, accept me as your Master, and I can guarantee you will become an Earth Grade alchemist at the very least!" Wu Song Lin said immediately.

Hearing these words from him, Fu Yuan Sheng instantly understood that Ling Han had no relations to Wu Song Lin. He quickly squeezed himself into the fray and said, "No, no, no, take me as your Master! I am the Pavilion Master of Rain Country's Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, and I've got uncountable resources in my hands. You can concoct any pill you like!"

"Nonsense! Old Man Fu, you have to understand, this is the territory of my Hu Yang Academy! Are you trying to snatch my disciples away from me?" Wu Song Lin was instantly enraged. This young man was obviously a genius of alchemy that could never be encountered within a thousand years. Just take a look at that Storm Pill, and you'll know, that's thirteen Stars. This was practically without precedent!

"What do you mean by snatching your disciples away from you?

You don't even know the name of this young man, and you dare to say he's your disciple?" Fu Yuan Sheng snorted. He turned back round, all smiles again, "Young man, what's your name?"

Li Si Chan was completely struck dumb with shock. These two men were the best alchemists in the whole of Rain Country. Whichever one of them announced they intended to accept disciples, it was absolutely guaranteed that there would be a queue of people all the way from the East Gate to the West Gate of the imperial city.

But now, these two men were actually fighting with each other over who gets to accept Ling Han as a disciple, and were even about to come to blows over the matter. How could this not astonish her?

Moreover, she was even a little jealous.

"I am Ling Han," Ling Han said. "I am one of the new students that is entering Hu Yang Academy this year."

"Did you hear that, this is a disciple of my department!" Wu Song Lin said proudly, and waved his hand a few times at Fu Yuan Sheng, "I don't have the time to share a drink with you today, so you'd best hurry back to your Heaven's Medicine Pavilion."

"So what if he's a student of your Hu Yang Academy? That doesn't conflict with him accepting me as his Master!" Fu Yuan Sheng was completely indifferent, and continued to say to Ling Han, "Young man, what do you say?"

"This is my disciple, Old Man Fu, are you going to fight with me over him?" Wu Song Lin said in a thunderous rage.

"For such a disciple, I'm definitely willing to fight!" Fu Yuan Sheng said, not to be outdone.

"You're going to ignore our friendship of so many years?"

"Pei, you're the one who's so insistent on fighting with me!"

Neither of the two old men was intending to back down, and from the looks of it, they were moments away from fighting with each other.

"Er, Master, the both of you can accept him as your joint disciple!" Li Si Chan interrupted.

"That's right!" The two old men paused at the same time. Why hadn't they thought of such a simple solution?

The two of them turned to look at Ling Han.

Ling Han smiled faintly, and said, "I think... that the both of you might not be able to teach me anything."

This, this, this... what arrogance!

Li Si Chan's small mouth was wide open in shock. Who were Wu Song Lin and Fu Yuan Sheng? They were the two strongest alchemists in Rain Country! And they couldn't teach him anything? Even though you've managed to concoct a Storm Pill worth thirteen Stars, the Storm Pill is only a Yellow Grade mid level pill after all.

Wu Song Lin and Fu Yuan Sheng both looked displeased. This young man was a genius, but he was really too arrogant. Such a person may possibly shine for a moment, but definitely would not achieve

too much.

Ling Han smiled, and said, "The two of you, we can discuss our theories with each other, and learn from one another."

Saying such words was really him being extremely modest and humble. As someone who had once been the Alchemy Emperor, putting aside that these two men were only Black Grade high level alchemists, even Earth Grade high level alchemists were only qualified to stand quietly and listen respectfully to his words in front of him.

Yet Wu Song Lin and Fu Yuan Sheng did not know that, so the displeasure on their faces deepened even further.

Ling Han pretended he had not seen anything, and casually began to speak. Most of what he said was only common knowledge of alchemy. Though his cultivation level had decreased by much, and there was no way he was able to concoct high grade alchemical pills, but if you were talking about theoretical knowledge, who would be able to match him?

The two alchemists had been initially indifferent, but then they gradually became serious. Occasionally, they would offer their own opinions, but as the discussion continued, they had transformed into the learning side, and continued to ask Ling Han about some difficult problems they had encountered in alchemy.

Li Si Chan watched all this happen from the side. She had long been shocked to numbness.

This young man was obviously even younger than herself, yet how was it that he had such shocking understanding and comprehension in the field of alchemy? If one did not see his appearance and did not hear his voice, anyone would think that this was an elderly alchemist.

She too possessed a terrifying talent in the field of alchemy, which was why she had been accepted by Wu Song Lin as his personal disciple. Moreover, she was also extremely beautiful, and together with Liu Yu Tong, the both of them were called the Twin Pearls of the imperial city. The number of people who were interested in pursuing and wooing her would be enough to form a queue that could encircle the imperial city.

But when you compared the two of them, she was practically like an alchemist's apprentice that had not even yet been formally taught!

As she listened, the admiration she felt for Ling Han grew even stronger. She could not help sighing, there were indeed geniuses in

this world. If that was not true, how was it possible that someone at such a young age had already surpassed her Master?

"Indeed, there is no age restriction for learning. Whoever has the ability deserves to be called a teacher!" Fu Yuan Sheng was the first to exhale. "I had initially thought that Young Friend was too arrogant and proud, yet never thought that the one who was too arrogant and proud was myself! Young Friend's level of comprehension in alchemy has already far surpassed the both of us, and in future, you'd definitely be able to become an Earth Grade alchemist, or even a Heaven Grade alchemist!"

"After I've heard these words from you, I feel as if the grand door to Earth Grade alchemy has opened for me, and once I manage to fully comprehend your views, I'd definitely be able to advance into the ranks of Earth Grade!" Wu Song Lin sighed as well. He stood, bowed for a long while to Ling Han, and said, "Many thanks, Young Friend!"

"Many thanks, Young Friend!" Fu Yuan Sheng had also stood, and bowed towards Ling Han.

Li Si Chan was completely numb with shock. Because of the unique status accorded to alchemists, these two men could be considered as possessing the highest status, and were only below the Emperor in rank. Yet now, they actually both bowed to a youngster. This was a special treatment that not even the Emperor of Rain Country could enjoy. If this news spread out, probably no one would believe it, right?

Chapter 94: Fighting to Take In

Ling Han accepted their bows of respect without an ounce of guilt. Previously, he had indeed been teaching these two men. With these teachings from him, it was very likely that these two men had gained a chance to advance to each become an Earth Grade alchemist. Otherwise.... they couldn't even dream of achieving such heights within this lifetime.

He could be considered as half the Master of these two men. As a result, it was only right for him to receive a bow of respect from these two men.

"If Young Master Han has any problems in future, please do come to Heaven's Medicine Pavilion to seek me out," Fu Yuan Sheng said solemnly. He did not dare to address Ling Han as Young Friend any longer.

Wu Song Lin did not say anything along these lines. After all, Ling Han was a disciple of Hu Yang Academy, so he could see Ling Han at any time that he liked. He would of course not allow Ling Han to suffer any grievances in his territory.

Ling Han smiled softly. He was not the type of person to selflessly offer gifts. The reason why he had taught these two men was because of their high status, and thus, he would have gained two powerful supporters in the imperial city, so he would have fewer qualms when doing certain things in this city.

Fu Yuan Sheng excused himself and departed. A lot of the difficult problems in the field of alchemy that had been troubling him had been solved, so he needed to immediately return to digest this new knowledge and completely transform it into his own understanding and comprehension.

"Old Man Wu, return my disciple quickly!" It was at this very moment that an old man barged in, while the teacher in charge of enrollment followed behind. Needless to say, this was one of the

Headmasters of Hu Yang Academy, Lian Guang Zu.

"What your disciple!" Wu Song Lin immediately glared at this intruder, "This is obviously a disciple of our Alchemy Department, when did he become a disciple of your Martial Arts Department?"

...Hu Yang Academy was actually divided into two departments, the Martial Arts Department and Alchemy Department. However, because there were indeed too few alchemists, when people talked about the Hu Yang Academy, they were actually referring to the Martial Arts Department.

In Wu Song Lin's opinion, Ling Han's level of comprehension and understanding of alchemy was at quite scary heights, and his theoretical knowledge of the field was even deeper than his own. Then, naturally, he should be enrolled into the Alchemy Department, and concentrate his efforts on concocting alchemical pills, advancing step by step to the top of the field.

"Nonsense, this brat's battle prowess is outstanding, so of course he belongs to our Martial Department, and you actually plan to have him learn how to concoct alchemical pills. This is practically leading him astray!" Lian Guang Zu was furious. He took great strides and was soon in front of Wu Song Lin, pointing a finger at the latter while being so close that his finger was almost at the tip of Wu Song Lin's nose.

"You're the one talking nonsense. This brat's understanding of alchemy is so high that there has practically been no precedent. To have him practice martial arts is the greatest waste of talent!" Wu Song Lin, not to be outdone, also pointed a finger at Lian Guang Zu's face.

"Old Man Wu, I'm warning you, don't point your finger at my face!" Lian Guang Zu threatened.

"You were the one who pointed your finger at me first!" Wu Song Lin humped, "Withdraw your finger first!"

"Pei, you take it back first!"

"You first!"

If you added the age of each of these two old men, it would exceed one hundred and fifty years old; these two old men completely looked like two stubborn bulls, glaring so intensely at each other that their eyeballs seemed to be in danger of popping out from their eye sockets.

Li Si Chan could not stop herself from pressing a hand to her forehead. Lian Guang Zu and Wu Song Lin had actually been friends for many years, yet these two old men had always been way too prone to arguing with each other. They'd be shouting and pointing their fingers at each other for each small issue, as if they were two mortal enemies.

As for the teacher in charge of enrollment, he was completely dumbstruck by this scene. He knew that Ling Han was exceptionally talented, with outstanding battle prowess for someone his age. But to actually cause these two Headmasters to almost come to blows just to have him enroll in their own Department, this was something that he had never imagined would happen.

Hiss, wouldn't this brat be able to do as he liked in Hu Yang Academy in the future? No, no, no, with these two Headmasters watching over him, he'd even be able to do as he liked in the whole imperial city!

You have to understand, these two men were not only powerful warriors of Spiritual Pedestal Tier, they were also the Headmasters of the Academy, and have taught uncountable numbers of elites, so their status was incomparably revered. Moreover, Wu Song Lin also had the additional status of a Black Grade high level alchemist, so even the Emperor of Rain Country had to address him respectfully as Grandmaster when they met.

The teacher in charge of enrollment could not help becoming so

envious that his eyes had turned red.

"Fine, I will not lower myself to your level, but this brat is a disciple of my Martial Arts Department, so I'm going to take him back!" Lian Guang Zu grabbed hold of Ling Han's shoulder.

"Nonsense, this is the future star of my Alchemy Department, and he is going to be the hope of the entire field of alchemy, how could I allow you to waste his talent like that!" Wu Song Lin quickly held onto Ling Han's other shoulder.

"Let go!"

"You let go!"

The two old men each tugged at one shoulder, both intending to pull Ling Han to their side. However, they did not dare to put too much strength into it so as to avoid directly tearing Ling Han into halves—they could only glare furiously at each other and gasp continuously in exertion.

These two men were extraordinarily outstanding individuals that could cause the entire Rain Country to tremble with a few stomps of their feet, and now they were actually about to come to blows as they fought over a young man. Who would believe that such a thing could be possible?

Li Si Chan was flushing in embarrassment. These two old men really did not act their own age. They were so old already, and yet they still liked to bicker with each other like two little kids.

Meanwhile, Hu Niu gave a loud burp. She had really enjoyed her meal.

"Young Master Han, just say the word. Are you going to learn martial arts from this old man, or enter our Alchemy Department, and join us in researching alchemy?" Wu Song Lin asked. He did not want to have this genius of alchemy take a misstep in life.

"Don't be afraid of this old man, just tell him the truth. Don't you want to learn martial arts?" Lian Guang Zu hurriedly said. Due to

his agitated state, he had not noticed that Wu Song Lin had used the respectful address of 'Young Master Han'.

"Young Master Han, if you agree to enroll in the Alchemy Department, I will immediately give you a thousand academic points!" Wu Song Lin gave him a very sincere offer in exchange for his agreement.

What!

Li Si Chan and the teacher in charge of enrollment were both dumbstruck with shock. A thousand academic points!

Within the Hu Yang Academy, academic points could be exchanged for a multitude of various items: cultivation techniques, martial arts techniques, alchemical pills, as well as various natural treasures. But it was very difficult to obtain academic points. Even a genius like Liu Yu Tong may not have accumulated a thousand points altogether throughout the years she spent in the Academy.

"Hey, hey, hey, Old Man Wu, you can't just simply give out academic points any which way you like. Rewarding with academic points is very strictly regulated, and you're not exempted from the rules!" Lian Guang Zu hurriedly spoke.

"Hey, hey, do you think I'm that kind of man?" Wu Song Lin said proudly, "Young Master Han has just completed the recovery of the Storm Pill. Does such a beneficial contribution not deserve a mere thousand academic points?"

"What?!" Lian Guang Zu gasped quickly, "Hadn't you recovered the Storm Pill a long time ago?"

"The pill formula I recovered could only produce a pill of eight Stars, yet the pill that this young friend had just concocted managed to reach thirteen Stars!" Wu Song Lin said extremely proudly, as if he was the one who had accomplished such a magnificent feat.

Lian Guang Zu could not help but begin to feel as if he should

concede, but then he immediately recalled Ling Han's extraordinary talent in martial arts: reaching the fourth, no, the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier at the young age of seventeen! Moreover, at the mere level of the fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier, he managed to defeat Qi Yong Ye!

Such a talented genius of martial arts, what was he going to learn if not martial arts?

But the problem was, Ling Han had not yet made any significant contribution in the name of the Martial Arts Department, so he could not really afford to reward Ling Han with any academic points.

The old man began to sweat uncontrollably due to his anxiety.

At this moment, Ling Han finally spoke, "I'll just learn from both Departments!"

He was the Alchemy Emperor, so if he casually offered some long-lost ancient pill formulae, he'd be able to get a huge pile of academic points. He would of course not surrender such an easy and attractive opportunity. Moreover, he did not intend to resume his old path of alchemy, and would be concentrating the majority of his efforts on the path of martial arts.

The two old men looked at him doubtfully. After all, whether it was the field of martial arts or the field of alchemy, both were wide-ranging and profound fields of knowledge. Even if one spent his whole lifetime, it was practically impossible for him to reach the top of the field, what more to simultaneously practice in both fields.

"I'm a genius, so there won't be any problems!" Ling Han said confidently.

Li Si Chan had half-opened her mouth in shock. She was astonished by the level of shamelessness Ling Han could go to. How could someone praise himself to such an extent? But then she

recalled Ling Han's previous performance—even two Black Grade high level alchemists ignored their pride to seek his teachings. There indeed does not seem to be much problems with regards to the field of alchemy.

"There really won't be any problems?" The two old men asked in unison.

"Definitely no problem!" Ling Han said with a smile.

Chapter 95: Looking for a Teacher

"All right then!" The two old men nodded at the same time. They had been friends for many years after all. While they had previously argued quite vigorously, neither wanted to damage the harmony between them, so this was an appropriate solution to the problem.

"Here, this is the plaque for my Alchemy Department. Just hold onto this, and you'd be able to freely enter the Alchemy Department," Wu Song Lin handed an iron plaque over to Ling Han.

"Old Man Wu, this brat just arrived to the Academy to report today, so I'm going to take him to the Martial Arts Department to register first, then make arrangements for his accommodation," Lian Guang Zu said tugging on Ling Han, and left quickly.

Lian Guang Zu dragged Ling Han off for a very considerable distance before finally stopping, when he asked the teacher in charge of enrollment, "Why had you let this brat run off to Old Man Wu's?"

The teacher felt very wronged. How could he have known that Ling Han loved to run around so much? He had just barely been gone for a while, and when he returned, Ling Han had disappeared. Yet he dared not argue with the Headmaster, and could only lower his head humbly and admit his fault. Thankfully, Lian Guang Zu only wanted to vent some of his displeasure, and was not really blaming him.

"Good brat, ah, he had defeated Qi Yong Ye at the mere level of fourth layer of Element Gathering Tier. He should have about twelve Battle Stars, a whole eight Stars more than what he should have at his current cultivation level. Not even that brat, Can Ye, would be able to match this kind of talent!" Lian Guang Zu murmured, his eyes bright. "Such a genius of martial arts, how

could he waste his time on concocting alchemical pills."

If these words were heard by Wu Song Lin, based on his understanding of Lian Guang Zu, he'd definitely be able to guess that the latter had come up with a wicked idea.

"You arrange for him to stay in a more remote location... also, arrange for him to be taught by a teacher that has no disciples—you must not let Old Man Wu find him!"

He was indeed two-faced! [ED/N: Literally black-bellied :3]

The teacher in charge of enrollment could not help sweating, and nodded hesitatingly. This was the Headmaster, so he definitely had to obey his words. But Wu Song Lin was also the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department, plus he was also a Black Grade high level alchemist. In Rain Country, his status was more or less right below the Emperor of Rain Country. If Wu Song Lin really intended to rebuke him, would he able to withstand the consequences?

Lian Guang Zu of course understood the possible consequences, and so he said, "After you're done with this, take a vacation for half a year. You will still be paid your monthly salary during your vacation."

The teacher in charge of enrollment heard this, and was instantly delighted. This not only allowed him to lie low until Wu Song Lin calmed down, he could even be paid without working at all. This was naturally the best option for him.

"Which teacher would be the best?" After Lian Guang Zu had left, the teacher in charge of enrollment thought furiously. "Ah, I've got it!" He smiled, "Old Mo!"

"Old Mo?" Ling Han was carrying Hu Niu with one arm, while his other hand was holding onto a light bundle that only contained a few changes of clothing.

The teacher in charge of enrollment said, "Old Mo's real name is Mo Gao. He also used to be a genius of our Martial Arts

Department, but later on, it was as if he had been possessed. He actually proclaimed that he wanted to create the ultimate sword arts technique in this world. The result was that his cultivation level stagnated and he did not advance any further. If it was not for the fact that the Headmaster sympathized with his talent and took him in as a teacher at the Academy.... ai!

But in any case, the Headmaster intends to teach you personally, so you do not have to concern yourself with Old Mo's cultivation level."

Ling Han was led by the teacher to an extremely remote location. There were only a bare few courtyards here, and they were all in shambles. The wild grass by the side of the pathway had already reached the height of his waist, so it was likely that no one had lived here for a very long time.

"Peng, peng, peng," the teacher stepped forward to knock on the door.

After quite some time, a voice finally came from within, and said, "Who is it?"

"Old Mo, it's me!" The teacher said. From the looks of it, the two of them were quite familiar with each other.

The door opened, and out walked a medium-sized man. He should have been less than forty years old, but his whole face was covered with a beard and he looked extremely disheveled—as he had not trimmed it in any way, it simply grew as it liked; thus, appearance-wise, he appeared like a man who was in his sixties or seventies.

"What is it? If there's nothing important, I have to go practice my sword techniques!" The man said. He was obviously Mo Gao.

"I'm here to deliver a student to you!" The teacher pointed at Ling Han, and said, "His name is Ling Han! All right, I've delivered him successfully to you, so I'll take my leave!"

It was as if a fire had been lit under his behind. He immediately ran off, terrified that he would encounter Wu Song Lin. In that case, he'd really be trapped between a rock and a hard place.

Ling Han stared at Mo Gao, and Mo Gao also stared back at Ling Han. For a moment, neither of them opened their mouths to speak.

After a while, Mo Gao finally nodded, and said, "Since I'm a teacher here, I can't really decline an assignment given to me by the Academy. In the future, you can just follow me to practice sword techniques."

"All right!" Ling Han was indifferent.

"The few courtyards nearby are all empty. Just pick any which one to stay in!" Mo Gao turned back round and returned to where he had come from. "I'll just leave this door open, and you can come in whenever you like. But it is strictly forbidden to disturb me when I'm practicing my sword techniques."

Ling Han shrugged, and together with Hu Niu, went off in search of an appropriate place of accommodation.

The courtyards here were all in shambles, with dust coating every surface. He chose a slightly better courtyard, and began a cleaning campaign. The courtyard had to be habitable, right?

Hu Niu too tried to give a hand, but naturally, she was more of a hindrance than of help. With a flop, bits of dust flew all around in the air and her small face was transformed into the face of a little floret cat, causing Ling Han to laugh loudly in spite of himself.

After busying themselves for over half a day, they had at least managed to completely tidy up a single room. Ling Han did not go immediately to seek out Liu Yu Tong, and trusted that she would take good care of Ling Zi Xuan.

"Anyone here?" A voice was heard from the doorway. Ling Han walked over to take a look, and there stood a young boy in his teens, who was pushing a small cart. There was a sack of rice, some

meat, and vegetables on the cart.

"Meat! Meat! Meat!" Hu Niu's eyes had immediately lit up. She took a leap and pounced over, scaring the young boy so much that he had fallen onto his behind on the ground.

He was here to deliver the food rations. It looked like Ling Han would be preparing his own meals in the future.

Ling Han smiled, walked over and pulled the young boy up. He asked, "How many days is this food for?"

"Ten days," the young boy said, "After ten days, I'll come back to deliver some more food."

Ling Han shook his head, and said, "This is not enough, there's only enough here for a single day."

"One day?" The young boy was shocked, and his eyes swept over Ling Han in doubt. No matter how it was, he really could not see how it was possible that Ling Han would have such a huge appetite.

"Never mind, just deliver the food here. Money's no issue," Ling Han said, smiling.

"The Academy does not have any regulations on the daily amount of food, but are you guys sure you can finish eating so much?" The young boy was in disbelief.

Ling Han did not bother to explain himself. In truth, the one with such a huge appetite was not himself, but Hu Niu.

The young boy unloaded the food from the cart, and pushing the cart, he departed. Hu Niu immediately started to jump around Ling Han, looking very impatient.

"Don't rush, it's not even night yet!" Ling Han said with a laugh.

Hu Niu was instantly displeased and pouted, baring her teeth at Ling Han.

Ling Han laughed loudly and said, "I won't be cooking today.

We'll go and walk around the city. We'll have to buy new blankets and other essentials, as well as prepare a few more changes of clothing. After we're done shopping, we can go eat."

"Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!" Hearing the word 'eat', the little girl immediately began to jump around again, her earlier displeasure completely gone.

Ling Han brought the little girl and went out. He had already applied for permission from Lian Guang Zu so that the girl could stay with him here. Otherwise, if she had to stay outside the Academy grounds, Ling Han really had no idea who would be capable of caring for her.

He held onto Hu Niu's hand and walked to allow the girl to get used to walking with two legs, and not keep thinking about walking around on all fours.

"Come see, come see, Zhu Wu Jiu is challenging Nangong Ji!" They hadn't even left the grounds of the Academy before hearing this announcement from a student who appeared to be extremely excited.

Chapter 96: Silver Moon Race

Ling Han could not help feeling moved and followed at the heels of the advancing crowd.

There were more and more people joining the crowd, and as they discussed the details about the battle between Zhu Wu Jiu and Nangong Ji, Ling Han very quickly came to understand the background of these two young men.

Zhu Wu Jiu and Nangong Ji were both Ordinary Disciples of Hu Yang Academy, but Nangong Ji was ranked in the top ten strongest Ordinary Disciples, and was an elite martial artist that was qualified enough to issue a challenge to the True Disciples in a bid to join their ranks. Zhu Wu Jiu was slightly inferior to him, but ability-wise, he was definitely ranked within the top twenty Ordinary Disciples, so he was really not that bad.

"Why is Zhu Wu Jiu still so dead-set on fighting with Nangong Ji?"

"There's nothing to be done about it, who asked Elder Brother Disciple Nangong to sacrifice Elder Sister Disciple Han Juan to save his own life during their previous practical training trip. You've got to understand, Elder Sister Disciple Han Juan was Zhu Wu Jiu's lover, so how could he not go crazy?"

"I heard that Elder Sister Disciple Han Juan actually died because of Elder Brother Disciple Nangong. She had been injured by his sword, and that was why she had fallen behind and was forced into a life-and-death battle with the Silvery Light Beast. That's how Elder Brother Disciple Nangong managed to buy the time to flee with his life."

"Shh, how could you so openly speak of such things? Be careful that Nangong Ji won't make trouble for you later. He's the Fifth Young Master of the Nangong Clan, and his Third Elder Brother, Nangong Xing, is even a True Disciple with the cultivation level of

the third layer of Gushing Spring Tier!"

"But Zhu Wu Jiu is indeed faithful. He obviously knows that the Nangong Clan is not to be trifled with, yet he would still challenge Nangong Ji to a duel every year. Just last year, he was so heavily injured that he had almost lost his life. Never thought that he'd issue a challenge again this year."

"It's a pity that Zhu Wu Jiu is really not that talented. He only has an Earth Grade low level Spirit Base and he comes from a poor family, so he can't obtain any additional resources for his development. The gap between him and Nangong Ji would only become wider and wider."

When Ling Han heard the people around him discussing the history between Zhu Wu Jiu and Nangong Ji, he could not help but feel slightly curious about this Zhu Wu Jiu.

The crowd soon arrived at the Martial Training Court of the Academy, and they could see there was someone standing within, so the others very naturally did not step into the court. Sparring was an allowed practice of Hu Yang Academy, and as long as both sides of the battle agreed, they'd be able to carry out their battle in the Martial Training Court.

The doctrine was to be as merciful as possible, but even if the fighters did not manage to restrain themselves in time, they wouldn't be punished too harshly. After all, weapons were blind. However, if anyone dared to deliberately injure their opponent, the Academy would hand out a very severe punishment.

For example, if one of the fighters had already admitted defeat or fallen unconscious—or had otherwise completely lost the ability to defend themselves—yet their opponent continued to attack them, this would be considered a breach of the rules that'd be met with a severe punishment.

Ling Han looked at the man that was standing in the Martial Training Court. He seemed to be about twenty-five or twenty-six

years old. He was a tall man who bore a long sword on his back. He could not really be considered handsome, but his gaze was very intimidating. Usually, others probably dared not look him directly in the eye.

"Why isn't Nangong Ji here yet?"

"He's the one being challenged, so of course he has to put on some appropriate airs."

"I say, how many times has Zhu Wu Jiu challenged Nangong Ji already?"

"This should be the fifth time, right?"

"That means that four years have passed!"

"This guy's perseverance is really a scary thing. With each battle, he would be severely injured and close to death, yet he would still grit his teeth and survive regardless, making others can't help but admire his determination."

While waiting, the crowd continued to talk among themselves. They were all expressing sympathy and admiration for Zhu Wu Jiu.

"Yi?"

The corners of Ling Han's lips turned up slightly into a grin as he thought, 'I never thought that I'd be able to encounter someone with a special constitution! His body is surrounded by ripples of faint silvery light, plus the others said that he did not die even after receiving a critical injury four times. Instead, he very quickly recovered. This person must be a member of the Silver Moon Race!'

The Silver Moon Race was born with the Silver Moon constitution. This was a constitution that had powerful abilities of recovery, and their bodies themselves could be considered a divine healing pill. As a result, the numbers of this race were pitifully low.

...They had been hunted down and killed by others, concocted into alchemical pills.

'I had originally thought that after ten thousand years had passed, this race would have gone extinct. I never thought that I'd be able to encounter one of its members today!'

Fine, for the sake of the Silver Moon King, I'll give him a helping hand.'

Ten thousand years ago, Ling Han entered the territory of the Silver Moon Race to collect some medicinal ingredients. He was very cordially received by the leader of the Silver Moon Race of the time, the Silver Moon King. Unfortunately, not long after that, the Silver Moon Race was wiped out. Ling Han's cultivation level at that time was still too low, so there was nothing he could do to help. Later on, when he had joined the ranks of Heaven Tier cultivators, the culprits responsible for the obliteration of the Silver Moon Race had all died of old age.

This was one of Ling Han's regrets.

"Hahaha, Zhu Wu Jiu, how many times must you fail before you understand that you will never be a match for me!" Meanwhile, a young man strode into the Martial Training Court, a powerful aura emanating from his person.

Ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and he was at the peak period!

If he did not have such ability, how else could he have managed to secure his place among the top ten strongest Ordinary Disciples?

Compared to him, Zhu Wu Jiu was very much inferior, with a cultivation level of only the seventh layer of Element Gathering Tier. Yet everyone knew that cultivation level did not represent one's battle prowess. Since Zhu Wu Jiu was able to rank among the top twenty, it could be seen that his actual battle prowess far surpassed his own cultivation level.

"Speak less nonsense, make your move!" Zhu Wu Jiu immediately drew out his sword and made a gesture with it.

Nangong Ji's face was filled with arrogance. He too made a gesture, and this signified that both fighters had agreed to begin this battle.

"Xiu," Zhu Wu Jiu rushed forwards, and as his sword swept in an arch, cold light danced about.

Nangong Ji was completely indifferent to this. He was an elite in the top ten, and compared to him, what could a mere Zhu Wu Jiu count as?

"Ding, ding, ding, ding..."

The two fighters were quickly embroiled in a fierce exchange of blows. Nangong Ji was very obviously having the upper hand in this battle. He looked very relaxed, and even managed to mock and ridicule his opponent as the battle went on to attack Zhu Wu Jiu's morale. However, in truth, in his heart concealed a deep dread towards Zhu Wu Jiu.

In the previous four battles, he had acted to kill Zhu Wu Jiu. Though the latter would not die immediately, if the injury dragged on for another two or three days, he'd definitely die. And, based on Zhu Wu Jiu's family background, there was no way he'd be able to afford high grade healing pills to heal his injuries.

Yet this guy not only did not die, he recovered from his wounds without any kind of aftereffects. After such miraculous recovery occurred four times, of course Nangong Ji would feel dread.

He knew his own guilt, and Zhu Wu Jiu was the only person that had relations with Han Juan, so as long as Zhu Wu Jiu was still alive, he would continue to be uneasy. This may lead to the day of his breakthrough to Gushing Spring Tier coming so slowly it would seem like forever!

As a result, he intended to be absolutely merciless today. He

definitely had to kill Zhu Wu Jiu right on the spot today.

Defeating and killing were two completely different issues; the difficulty level was completely different. Thus, if he wanted to kill Zhu Wu Jiu, then he needed to create an opportunity wherein he could kill Zhu Wu Jiu in a single strike. After the battle, he'd be able to shift the blame away from himself by saying he had not managed to restrain himself in time.

The two fighters continued to battle for a while, and Nangong Ji, with his much more superior ability, finally found an excellent opportunity. He stabbed with his sword, creating three flashes of cold light which headed directly for Zhu Wu Jiu's heart.

This was not Sword Qi. He had just stabbed so quickly that he had created two afterimages.

Earth Grade high level martial arts technique, Shadow Dance Sword Arts!

He spent all the academic points that he had saved up for this martial arts technique, just to prepare for today so that he could kill Zhu Wu Jiu.

'Die!' He spat out in his mind as he used the strongest move of the Shadow Dance Sword Arts to form a merciless attack.

"Xiu," Zhu Wu Jiu brandished his sword as well, and actually formed two flashes of cold light!

Could it be that he was also using an extremely swift sword technique?

No!

"Sword Qi!" The spectators all gasped in shock. This was Sword Qi, proof of a ruler!

"Pu! Pu!"

Two spurts of blood appeared at the same time. Nangong Ji's sword had pierced Zhu Wu Jiu's stomach, while the Sword Qi that

Zhu Wu Jiu had formed had drawn across Nangong Ji's throat, leaving behind a bloody wound.

A cold light appeared in Nangong Ji's eyes. He immediately drew back his sword and gave another stab. He wanted to kill his opponent!

"Shua," another flash of cold light drew over in an arch. Ling Han acted, stepping forward with a wave of his sword.

Chapter 97: Imparting

With a "ding", Nangong Ji was forced back by this strike. He glared furiously at Ling Han, and said, "Who are you to dare to meddle in my affairs? Don't you know that interfering in a battle is a very serious offense?!"

Ling Han smiled softly and said, "He can no longer continue the battle, so this battle is already over. However, if you would like to have a spar with me, I don't mind teaching you a lesson."

Nangong Ji glared angrily. Zhu Wu Jiu had actually managed to form a flash of Sword Qi, and now possessed the preliminary qualifications to step into the ranks of rulers. Zhu Wu Jiu may one day become a huge problem for him, and he had originally intended to finish him off completely today. He had never thought that their battle would be interrupted with Ling Han's interference.

"Brat, those who meddle too much in the affairs of others never have a good ending!" He threatened. Now, it was no longer possible for him to kill Zhu Wu Jiu on the spot, so his heart was filled with furious rage.

"You either battle with me now, or get lost. Don't babble so much!" Ling Han said disdainfully.

Nangong Ji looked very angered, yet in the end, he left in great strides with a wave of his hands.

After feeling Ling Han's sword strike just now, he knew that the former was definitely not weaker than himself. Moreover, he was a cautious person, and would never go into battle unprepared. Since he was no longer able to kill Zhu Wu Jiu, he simply chose to leave.

However, judging from his character, this matter would not simply end like this. He would first investigate Ling Han's background thoroughly, and then decide what was to be done.

"Who's this guy, actually daring to oppose Nangong Ji?"

"Should be one of the new students this year, right?"

"From the looks of his aura, he only seems to be in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tier, yet he actually managed to scare off Nangong Ji. It's really strange."

"However, the Nangong Clan is not to be trifled with, and there's also Nangong Xing who is a True Disciple of the Academy!"

"Forget it, we'd better not get too close to him, or we'd be inviting trouble to ourselves."

The spectators discussed spiritedly, and very quickly departed from the Martial Training Court.

Zhu Wu Jiu slowly and painstakingly got up. The special constitution of the Silver Moon Race was indeed impressive. He had recovered considerably after this short period of rest even after receiving such a serious injury. Of course, this rate of recovery could not be compared to the healing effects of the Indestructible Heaven Scroll.

Firstly, the Indestructible Heaven Scroll was too high-level, and secondly, Zhu Wu Jiu himself was still too weak, and was unable to make full use of his special constitution's potential.

"Why did you help me?" Zhu Wu Jiu spoke, "Aren't you afraid of getting in trouble with the Nangong Clan?"

"Can't it be that I helped you because I couldn't stand the injustice happening in front of me?" Ling Han said with a smile.

"I don't believe that there are still such naive people in this world!" Zhu Wu Jiu shook his head, "But, I live in poverty and you won't be able to get much from me, so I advise you not to waste your energy."

"Then..." Ling Han thought for a moment, "become my subordinate."

"For the aid you've provided me today, I will definitely pay you back for your kindness another day!" Zhu Wu Jiu turned around to leave, obviously unwilling to accept the offer of becoming Ling Han's subordinate.

Those who managed to get into Hu Yang Academy were all geniuses, so how could they be willing to be under the command of someone else?

Ling Han did not chase after him. Instead, he said calmly, "You don't want your revenge anymore?"

Zhu Wu Jiu's steps suddenly paused, and he slowed down.

"I can teach you!" Ling Han continued, "Within half a year, I will definitely be able to help you surpass Nangong Ji and take your revenge with your own hands!"

Zhu Wu Jiu suddenly turned back round, and said, "Really?"

"You've already said that you live in poverty. What would I get from lying to you?" Ling Han said with a smile.

Zhu Wu Jiu hesitated for a moment, and said, "All right, I agree to become your follower. If you are not able to help me surpass Nangong Ji within half a year, then this will be my payback for your help earlier. If you are able to, then my life will belong to you!"

This guy really was a loyal person. Still, becoming Ling Han's subordinate was in actual fact not a bad thing to happen to him. Instead, this was an opportunity of epic proportions. If it was not for the fact that Ling Han had shared an amicable friendship with the Silver Moon King years ago, he'd definitely not be wasting so much of his effort.

"En!" Ling Han nodded, and said, "I'll impart to you a cultivation technique, and in the future, you have to switch to practicing this cultivation technique."

He lowered his voice and imparted a cultivation technique to Zhu

Wu Jiu; it was called the Silver Moon Arts.

That's right, this cultivation technique was created specifically for the Silver Moon Race.

Years ago, after the Silver Moon Race had been wiped out, Ling Han, after achieving a high cultivation level, had once journeyed all over in search of the survivors of the Silver Moon Race. He didn't find anyone, but he did find this most precious cultivation technique of the Silver Moon Race, the Silver Moon Arts.

He had an excellent memory. At the time, he had only flipped through the pages once, and managed to memorize the entirety of it. Otherwise, he would not have been able to take it out now.

The Silver Moon Arts, when used by a member of the Silver Moon Race such as Zhu Wu Jiu, would fully display the might of his special constitution. At least, it would allow him to increase his battle prowess by one Star. Moreover, the Silver Moon Arts was an Earth Grade high level technique, so it would be enough to help Zhu Wu Jiu very quickly catch up to Nangong Ji in cultivation level.

Silver Moon constitution and Sword Qi. If these two strengths added together still did not allow Zhu Wu Jiu to emerge victorious over Nangong Ji, then he was really too useless.

Zhu Wu Jiu did not know that this was an Earth Grade high level cultivation technique, nor did he know that it would help him make full use of the benefits of his special constitution. After asking about Ling Han's name and address, he left in a daze.

After all, he was still injured, so he did need to recover.

"Meat! Meat!" Hu Niu tugged on Ling Han's sleeve in displeasure.

"All right, all right, let's go have some meat!" Ling Han said with a laugh.

"Ling Han!"

"Brother Ling!"

Ling Han heard someone shout his name from a distance, and when he looked over, it was four of his old friends from Da Yuan City—Qi Yong Ye, Jin Wuji, Baili Teng Yun, and Li Dong Yue.

"Brother Ling came really late. Today, you must punish yourself with drinking three cups of wine," Baili Teng Yun said.

"How could three cups be enough, there should be at least ten cups!" Li Dong Yue joined in on the banter.

"Meat! Meat! Meat!" Hu Niu jumped up and down.

Ling Han laughed loudly, and said, "Let's go, I'll treat you guys to a meal today, and if you're not drunk by the end of it, you can't leave!"

"Nobody's leaving if they're not drunk!" Qi Yong Ye and the others laughed. The group of five adults plus one child exited the Academy, found a restaurant and began their drinking spree.

Yet Qi Yong Ye and the others very quickly discovered gloomily that when a dish was served and there was meat in it, it would be instantly devoured by Hu Niu—not even leaving any scraps behind. They then entered into the fierce battle for food, but if you were talking about eating, who would be able to snatch food faster than Hu Niu?

The little girl didn't even use chopsticks, and after using her bare hands to hold onto the food, how could the others find the desire to eat?

"This girl's stomach is a bottomless pit, right?"

Qi Yong Ye and the others were all very curious, but not even Qi Yong Ye recognized that the little girl in front of him was the one from the Wrestling Ring. After all, at that time, Hu Niu was very disheveled and completely filthy, unlike how she was now. And now, while she was still very wild, she looked very pretty and dainty, like a little porcelain doll.

"I am really envious of Brother Ling. You're already a True Disciple from the moment you enroll in the Academy, and can get your hands on uncountable resources for cultivation," Li Dong Yue said ruefully.

Qi Yong Ye nodded, and said, "There is really too much of a gap between True Disciples and Ordinary Disciples. The gap between myself and Feng Yan hadn't really been very big, but now... ai!"

"Fourth Prince, no matter what, at least you still have the Royal House of the Da Yuan King supporting you, so you're already much better than the rest of us," Jin Wuji said immediately.

"That's right, the resources from the Royal House of the Da Yuan King are even more abundant than the resources of all our four great parties added together. If you're going to complain about being poor, how are we supposed to go on?" Baili Teng Yun called out.

"Ling Han, I heard you have some grudges with Feng Luo. He's also entered the Academy now, so you have to be careful. He might ask Feng Yan to deal with you," Qi Yong Ye said all of a sudden.

Chapter 98: Lick My Shoes

"Feng Yan?" The corners of Ling Han's lips turned up into a smile, and he said, "How powerful is he now?"

"No one's really clear about exactly how powerful he is now. But the last time he returned to the Academy, he was already in the fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier. Plus, when someone saw him make a move in an ancient historical site, he had four flashes of Saber Qi," Qi Yong Ye said solemnly.

Fourth layer of Gushing Spring Tier was even higher than Can Ye's cultivation level. However, the change of Core Disciples was the same as the change of True Disciples. It could only happen at the end of every year, whereupon challenges would be issued to determine who would be replaced and who would remain.

Feng Yan most likely had just broken through. Moreover, cultivation level did not represent one's battle prowess. Can Ye's battle prowess was at seven Stars, so Feng Yan had not issued challenges to Can Ye, Zhao Huan, or Qi Feng Yun last month.

"Oh, right, before I came, I received the news that the Spiritual Treasures Pavilion will be holding an auction tonight. Anyone interested to go take a look?" Jin Wuji asked all of a sudden.

"Spiritual Treasures Pavilion?" Ling Han asked curiously.

"That's an auction house of the imperial city. The boss is enshrouded in mystery. According to rumors, nobody knows who he is—not even if the boss is a man or a woman, nor whether he or she is old or young. However, he or she must definitely come from a very important background, because no one has ever dared to make trouble at Spiritual Treasures Pavilion," Jin Wuji explained.

"It's not that nobody dared to make trouble, it's that those who have made trouble before have all died. Thus, nobody dares to make trouble anymore," Qi Yong Ye said. He could be considered as

a member of the royal family, and so knew more than Jin Wuji.

"Interesting, then let's go have a look," Ling Han said with a smile. If he could obtain a few of the other necessary drugs to concoct the Restore Spirit Pill at this auction house, then it wouldn't be too long before he could heal Ling Dong Xing's Spirit Base.

After he breaks through to Gushing Spring Tier, he'd be able to train his divine sense. The stronger his divine sense was, the higher the grade of alchemical pills he could concoct. But the temperature of the flames he could produce was still a problem, for the temperature could only be increased by advancing in cultivation level. No matter how skilled he was at controlling the heat of the flames, there was always a maximum limit to the temperature of the flame.

'Father's lifespan is limited, so this cannot be delayed for too long!' He thought. 'Either I find someone to help me concoct the pill, or I fuse my flames with the Strange Fires of Heaven and Earth. With the help of the Strange Fires, the temperature of the flames can be increased.'

However, the Strange Fires are much too rare. Even in my last life, I had never found a Strange Fire. But ten thousand years have passed, so perhaps my luck will change.'

The Strange Fires were a type of spiritual fire formed naturally by the environment. Should a martial artist refine a Strange Fire, he'd be able to increase his cultivation level, or form a special physical constitution. For alchemists, if they were able to fuse their flames with a Strange Fire, they'd be able to increase their alchemy skill. Years ago, there had been a relatively unknown alchemist who had happened to fuse his flames with one of the Strange Fires, and eventually became a world-famous Grandmaster Alchemist.

If Ling Han wanted to concoct the Restore Spirit Pill within a

short period of time, then fusing his flames with a Strange Fire seemed to be his only option—the greatest alchemist in Rain Country was only at Black Grade high level, and was absolutely not qualified enough to concoct an Earth Grade alchemical pill.

They had mostly finished eating, so they paid the bill and left, heading towards the Spiritual Treasures Pavilion to take part in the auction that would be held there.

Because it was not too far away, they did not hail down a carriage, and instead simply went there on foot. About twenty minutes later, they had finally arrived at the Spiritual Treasures Pavilion.

This was a place that was specifically meant for the sale of treasures.

What would be considered a treasure?

Weapons, cultivation techniques, martial arts techniques, alchemical pills, and medicinal ingredients could all be considered treasures as long as they had a high enough value, and could be sold here. There would be an auction held here every month to sell off some rarer, more valuable treasures, and every several months or years, there would be a large-scale auction which, according to rumors, would even move the hearts of the imperial family and the Eight Great Clans.

The auction that would be held today was the monthly auction. As such, there weren't many powerful warriors among the participants, but there was indeed a lot of people. It was only held once a month, after all, so there was a lot of rare, precious treasures that were going to be auctioned off.

They were just about to enter when they saw two young men walk towards them. These two young men were walking quite closely together, and from the looks of it, they had a very close relationship.

"Yi, it's you!" When one of them saw Ling Han, his expression turned cold. He pointed a finger at Ling Han and said, "Hahaha, you stupid brat, you never thought this would happen, right? I still managed to enter into Hu Yang Academy, and... I've even broken through to Element Gathering Tier!"

It was really too much of a coincidence. This guy was Feng Luo, but the fact that he had actually broken through to Element Gathering Tier was a bit unexpected. Based on his natural talent, he should not have been able to break through to Element Gathering Tier so quickly.

However, in Ling Han's eyes, he was only a minor character, thus Ling Han did not take him to heart. He merely said calmly, "Remove your finger. If not, I do not mind breaking it for you."

Feng Luo's face instantly looked enraged, but when he recalled Ling Han's battle prowess, he could not help fear creeping into his heart and withdrew his finger. Yet his mouth continued to say, "So what if you snatched away my place of enrollment into the Academy, my brother still managed to help me enter the Academy! Ling Han, let me tell you, don't think you can enjoy your days in the future, I will definitely destroy you!"

Feng Yan really did have his ways—to actually manage to procure a place of enrollment into Hu Yang Academy for his brother. Most likely, he was the same as Ling Dong Xing, and made some kind of deal with the Academy. Otherwise, no matter how much of a genius you were, it was impossible for the Academy to place so much importance on you that they'd freely gift you a place of enrollment into the Academy.

Ling Han laughed in spite of himself, and said, "Idiots who dare to threaten me this way have never had good endings!"

"What big talk!" The young man beside Feng Luo said. His face was filled with arrogance exceeding even Feng Luo's, his nostrils raised so high they were about to point skywards. "I have seen

quite a number of arrogant people in this imperial city, but someone like you... tsk, tsk, tsk, this is the first time."

"Hehe, Ling Han, do you know who this is?" Feng Luo asked proudly, and pointing at his companion, said, "This is Wei He Le, Young Master Wei! A rising star of the Hu Yang Academy, who would one day definitely become a Black Grade alchemist."

"So that is Wei He Le!" Jin Wuji gasped in surprise.

"Is he very strong?" Baili Teng Yun asked, "But he's only in the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, right?"

The first layer of Element Gathering Tier... even if he was a freak like Ling Han, it was absolutely useless. Against an opponent of the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, the only result would be being single-handedly dominated by his much stronger opponent. Baili Teng Yun had just entered the Hu Yang Academy, so he did not know that there was an Alchemy Department and was unable to make head or tail of Jin Wuji's reaction.

"He is extremely talented in the field of alchemy, and is already a Yellow Grade high level alchemist. Some say that even the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department has the intention to take him in as his personal disciple," Jin Wuji said in awe. When he saw the incomprehension still on Baili Teng Yun and Li Dong Yue's faces, he continued to explain, and said, "The Hu Yang Academy is actually divided into two, which are the Martial Arts Department and the Alchemy Department. The Headmaster of the Alchemy Department is a Black Grade high level alchemist!"

"Hiss!"

At this moment, Baili Teng Yun and Li Dong Yue took a sharp breath as they finally came to understand the background of Wei He Le. Black Grade high level alchemist, even if Zhu He Xin and Zhang Wei Shan saw him, they would still have to treat him with utmost respect and address him as Grandmaster.

"Hahahaha!" Wei He Le laughed loudly. He hadn't said anything just now to give them a chance to understand fully his background, which would allow him to show off to the greatest level. He regarded them with disdain and said, "I don't care what kind of grudges you guys have with Young Master Luo, but since I have seen it today, then I'll act as the mediator."

He paused for a moment, then said to Ling Han in a deep voice, "Kneel down, and lick Young Master Luo's shoes clean!"

Feng Luo was extremely proud of himself. Today, with Wei He Le's support, if Ling Han did not submit, that would mean opposing Wei He Le. Who was Wei He Le? He was a Yellow Grade high level alchemist, and could even possibly be taken by Wu Song Lin as disciple, with endless future prospects ahead of him.

Anyone with a working brain would definitely not dare to go against Wei He Le.

Today, he would be getting his payback, with interest.

Chapter 99: Thrash as Usual

Qi Yong Ye and the others looked absolutely furious at this.

Asking him to kneel down and lick another's shoes, what kind of great humiliation was that? If this Wei He Le was in Gushing Spring Tier, or a Black Grade alchemist, then perhaps he would be qualified to make such unreasonable demands. But he was only a Yellow Grade low level alchemist, a martial artist at the mere level of first layer of Element Gathering Tier; how did he get the confidence to talk so big?

The people who were born in the imperial city truly acted like they were superior to anyone and everyone else.

"You've gone too far!" Jin Wuji shouted immediately, "Wei He Le, you're only a mere Yellow Grade low level alchemist now, don't you think you're talking too big?"

"You dare to go against me?" Wei He Le smiled coldly, looking extremely confident in himself.

Indeed, he was only a Yellow Grade low level alchemist now, but his future prospects were limitless. Otherwise, why would Feng Luo go out of his way to deliberately befriend him? Of course, the reason why he had befriended Feng Luo was also because of Feng Yan. If not for Feng Yan, how would he have taken a mere martial artist of Element Gathering Tier seriously?

He possessed remarkable potential in the path of alchemy, while Feng Yan could possibly become a ruler in the field of martial arts. In this world, the strongest ruled after all. No matter how awesome an alchemist grew to be, he would still need the help of a powerful warrior proficient in martial arts.

Jin Wuji instantly felt the urge to hit someone. Wei He Le was only in the first layer of Element Gathering Tier, and from the looks of it, he had only managed to climb to this cultivation level

with the help of alchemical pills. Jin Wuji would be able to easily dominate him with one hand behind his back. Furthermore, his status as a mere Yellow Grade low level alchemist did not worry him at all, as there was no way that there would come a day that Jin Wuji would make any requests of an alchemist of this lowly rank.

The problem was that there was a high chance that Wei He Le may be taken in as disciple by Wu Song Lin, and Wu Song Lin was a Black Grade high level alchemist! Previously, they had all done Ling Han a favor by throwing their respective matches in Da Yuan City because there stood two Black Grade low level alchemists behind him; however, Wu Song Lin was a much grander figure than those two, so the pressure they felt was obvious.

Jin Wuji's expression turned dark and cold, yet he did not open his mouth to speak.

"What right do you have to be so arrogant!" Baili Teng Yun was in the prime of his youth, and so was easily moved by his emotions. He was also aware that he was a citizen of Da Yuan City, so even if this Wei He Le would one day become a Black Grade alchemist, it would not affect him whatsoever. As a result, he naturally held no fear of offending Wei He Le.

Wei He Le could not help showing displeasure at this, and said, "Are you challenging me?"

"So what if I am? Do you dare to battle with me?" Baili Teng Yun said arrogantly.

"Young Master Wei!" It was at this moment that another three young men joined them. These three newcomers all had a powerful aura radiating from them; they had all reached the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier.

"So it's you guys," Wei He Le spared a glance at them, and a faint, perfunctory smile appeared on his face.

"Young Master Wei, have you encountered some kind of trouble?" One of them said with a smile. The speaker was dressed in green battle robes, and was quite tall.

Wei He Le revealed a disdainful smile, pointed at Baili Teng Yun, and said, "This guy says he wants to challenge me."

"Hahahaha, where did this idiot come from, to actually dare to challenge Young Master Wei?" The green-clad man laughed loudly. He crooked a finger in Baili Teng Yun's direction, and said, "Come, come, come. I shall be your opponent."

How could Baili Teng Yun not react to such provocation? He was just about to agree when Qi Yong Ye held him back and said, "Wen Hai Xing, when did you become so immature? An elite ranked among the top hundred actually intends to bully a junior that had just barely enrolled in the Academy!"

"So it's the King of Eternal Night!" The green-clad man behaved as if he had just noticed Qi Yong Ye—he raised his clasped hands in the latter's direction, and said, "No wonder you dare to oppose Young Master Wei. The Fourth Prince of Da Yuan City is indeed domineering!"

His words appeared to be praising Qi Yong Ye, but in reality, they were an attempt to direct aggression to the latter.

Wei He Le's expression immediately darkened, and he said, "So you are a noble. No wonder you are so arrogant!" Since he was a child, he had already displayed outstanding talent in the field of alchemy. Everyone in his age range tried to curry his favor in order to form an amicable relationship with the great alchemist-to-be he was. Wen Hai Xing's words naturally caused him to feel very displeased about Qi Yong Ye's actions.

"Ling Han, are you going to kneel or not?" Feng Luo interrupted. The person he hated the most was naturally Ling Han, and Qi Yong Ye was the Fourth Prince of Da Yuan City, and was highly likely to inherit the position of Da Yuan King in the future, so naturally

Feng Luo was not willing to offend him.

"So this is the younger brother of Elder Brother Disciple Feng Yan," when Wen Hai Xing and his companions found out Feng Luo's identity, they all smiled immediately. Though they themselves looked down upon Feng Luo, they dared not show any disdain towards him in public. Feng Yan was too strong, and according to rumors, had the ability to challenge and join the ranks of the Core Disciples.

One of them immediately looked towards Ling Han, and said, "Brat, I, Shen Yu Xuan, am just going to say this now. If you are unable to make Younger Brother Disciple Feng Luo satisfied, then you will only be sent back to the Academy on a stretcher!"

"I, Mi Zhong Guang, am the same!" The third person said.

Feng Luo was extremely proud. He laughed loudly, and said, "Ling Han, do you still dare to be so unreasonable with me?! Who do you think you are, to dare to put on airs in front of me? You've humiliated me repeatedly. Who do you think I am? One single finger of mine is more precious than the whole you by ten thousandfold!"

Wei He Le and the others smiled coldly. A mere foreign new student would naturally not be taken seriously by them. The only people they would have misgivings about going against were only the direct heirs of the Eight Great Clans.

Outside the entrance, the four guards of the Spiritual Treasures Pavilion looked on with indifference. As long as no one was making trouble in the Spiritual Treasures Pavilion, then even if the sky collapsed, they would not interfere.

"Kneel!" Feng Luo roared loudly.

"Kneel your sister!" Ling Han reached out with his hand, which sped towards Feng Luo.

"How dare you!" Wen Hai Xing, Mi Zhong Guang, and Shen Yu

Xuan all acted at the same time. They were all in the ninth layer of Element Gathering Tier, and were extremely strong. None of them was inferior to Qi Yong Ye. The simultaneous movement of all three was terrifyingly powerful.

"Get out of my way!" Ling Han, using the Exiting Cloud Steps, actually managed to squeeze past the restraining movements of all three of them.

Wen Hai Xing and the others were all shocked. They'd noticed that Ling Han was only in the fifth layer of Element Gathering Tear, and so completely did not take him seriously. Who would have thought that Ling Han was actually so fast and had such a weird way of moving?

As a result, they had not used their full power, allowing Ling Han to easily break through their siege.

Ling Han had already appeared in front of Feng Luo, and his extended hand was already reaching towards the latter.

"You dare!" Wei He Le slanted his body to one side to stand in front of Feng Luo. He was well aware that he was a Yellow Grade low level alchemist, and was possibly the future disciple of the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department. So no matter how bold Ling Han was, he knew that Ling Han would not dare to touch a single hair on his head.

"Pa!"

However, his thoughts had just barely formed when a forceful slap from Ling Han smacked him out of the way.

Damn, this guy really dared to hit him?

Another slap from Ling Han caused Feng Luo to fall to the ground. Without waiting for him to get up, one of Ling Han's feet stepped very firmly on Feng Luo's face.

"Bastard, you actually dare to step on me? You are definitely tired of living, my brother will definitely kill you! Definitely!" Feng Luo

wailed terribly while continuing to threaten Ling Han.

Indeed, only a profligate, spoiled young master like him dared to issue such threats in public. What kind of place was the imperial city? Here, murder was a heavily punished crime.

At the side, Wei He Le's face was also filled with fury. He had actually been slapped away by someone? This was too insolent, too detestable! He will definitely not spare this reckless fool!

"Yi, Younger Brother Disciple Wei?" It was at this moment that a young man and woman walked over. When the maiden clearly saw Wei He Le's face, she revealed a surprised expression.

"Elder Sister Disciple Li!" Wei He Le hurriedly got to his feet. His hands remained lowered at his sides, looking extremely respectful.

This young maiden was Li Si Chan.

In front of others, Wei He Le could put on an extremely arrogant attitude, but in front of Li Si Chan, he could only obediently withdraw all his prideful obnoxiousness, because Li Si Chan's talent in alchemy was far above his own.

Wu Song Lin favored only his talent, but Li Si Chan was truly his most favorite disciple. Even if he really did become Wu Song Lin's disciple, he'd still have to treat Li Si Chan with utmost respect.

Chapter 100: Intimidated

The young man that had walked in together with Li Si Chan revealed an angered expression, "Who dares to be so bold as to disrespect an alchemist?"

"It's He Jun Chen!" Qi Yong Ye's brow immediately frowned, "A True Disciple, second layer of Gushing Spring Tier!"

He had not spoken in a low voice, as he was trying to forewarn Ling Han of this formidable newcomer.

Wei He Le, on the other hand, smiled. With an elite in the second layer of Gushing Spring Tier as his support, then no matter how strong Ling Han was, it wasn't possible for him to turn this situation around. He said, "Big Brother He, this brat is too arrogant. He bullied Elder Brother Disciple Feng Yan's younger brother, Feng Luo, first, and because I couldn't simply do nothing, I said a few words of justice. And he reacted by slapping me down to the ground."

"Oh, then I would really like to see, who is so awesome?" He Jun Chen said coldly.

"Ling Han!" Li Si Chan had finally spotted Ling Han now, and could not help but walk forwards a few steps. She said, "Where are you staying now? I've been looking for you everywhere!"

"Hiss!"

What was the relationship between these two people?

Hearing Li Si Chan's words, everyone could not help but feel curious—could it be, that maybe they...?

He Jun Chen's expression instantly darkened. He was one of Li Si Chan's admirers, and now his dream girl actually uttered words with such ambiguous meaning, causing him to instantly feel as bad as if he had swallowed a fly.

"No, no, no, my Master is the one looking for you!" Li Si Chan hurriedly corrected her words, sensing the awkward ambiguousness of what she had said.

"Oh, what's your Master looking for me for?" Ling Han asked very nonchalantly.

"Master would like to invite you to tea."

"Pu," practically everyone choked out of astonishment.

Who was Li Si Chan's Master? Wu Song Lin! And who was Wu Song Lin? A Black Grade high level alchemist, the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department, and an ultra big, extremely important person that could practically cause the whole of Rain Country to tremble with a few stomps of his feet!

Such a major character actually wanted to invite Ling Han to tea!

Hiss, how many people were actually able to have the honor of having tea together with Wu Song Lin? The Clan Heads of the Eight Great Clans, the Pavilion Master of Heavens's Medicine Pavilion, the Headmaster of the Martial Arts Department—probably just these few people, right? But this was Ling Han, an extremely minor character that had just enrolled into Hu Yang Academy! Could it be that he was able to stand on even footing with all these very important people of Rain Country?

"I don't have the time," Ling Han said calmly.

"Pu!"

Instantly, everyone once again choked, all wearing expressions of extreme disbelief.

Wu Song Lin's invitation to tea... most likely not even the Clan Heads of the Eight Great Clans dared to say they didn't have the time, right? This brat was really too awesome, and he had even rejected the invitation so cleanly.

Qi Yong Ye, Baili Teng Yun, and the others all looked overjoyed.

As their hearts beat wildly, they knew for sure that they had made the right gamble. But even they had never thought that Ling Han had just barely entered into the Hu Yang Academy yet had already formed relations with the Headmaster of the Alchemy Department, a Black Grade high level alchemist. Moreover, it seemed to be an extremely good relationship.

...If they discovered that even the other Black Grade high level alchemist of Rain Country, the Pavilion Master of Heaven's Medicine Pavilion, had to respectfully address Ling Han as "Young Master Han", one wonders what kind of expression these people would have.

"Release me, damn you, you actually dared to step on me, I will definitely not spare you!" Feng Luo was still wailing. His face was still stepped on firmly by Ling Han's foot, so he couldn't hear what the others were saying. However, even if he had heard, based on his knowledge, there was no way he would understand the significance of the name 'Wu Song Lin'.

Everyone's attitude changed at the same moment. Ling Han was someone that even Wu Song Lin wanted to invite to tea; who would dare to oppose such a person?

Feng Yan indeed had a very bright future ahead of him, but how could he compare with a Black Grade high level alchemist? Wei He Le was even less of a consideration in their minds; the current him wasn't even Wu Song Lin's personal disciple yet.

"Apologies for our prior offense. Please bear with us, Younger Brother Disciple Ling. We would definitely visit you to make a formal apology on another day!" Wen Hai Xing and his fellows said as they raised their clasped hands in Ling Han's direction in apology. In their hearts, they were already gritting their teeth with hatred towards Wei He Le and Feng Luo. If it was not for the two of them, how could they have offended Ling Han?

Ling Han only gave a casual wave of his hand. He had not taken

these three young men seriously in the first place.

Wen Hai Xing and his fellows were angered at first, but when they recalled that Ling Han was someone that Wu Song Lin wanted to invite to tea, their anger instantly disappeared—if it was Wu Song Lin who had treated them this way, would they dare to be angry?

Of course not, and that's the end of it.

On the other hand, Qi Yong Ye and the others all looked extremely satisfied. You guys were so arrogant just now, and now you're cowering like dogs! They all crossed their arms in front of their chests and raised their heads high, looking very disdainful.

Wen Hai Xing and his friends did not even dare to say anything. They hurriedly turned around and left, not even staying to participate in the auction.

...How would they still have the mood to? Rather, they were all thinking about how to gain Ling Han's forgiveness in the future.

Wei He Le's expression changed multiple times, as if he were a chameleon. In the end, he clenched his teeth, walked towards to Ling Han, and said, "Young Master Han, I was ignorant. I hope that you will generously forgive my misdemeanor this one time!"

"Who are you?" Ling Han asked serenely.

Wei He Le instantly felt like he wanted to bite someone, thinking, 'You didn't lose anything, and I was the one who received a slap from you. And now I'm actively apologizing, so why are you still unwilling to let the matter drop?'

"Younger Brother Disciple, do you have some kind of misunderstanding with Ling Han?" Li Si Chan's expression immediately darkened as she watched this happen. She was very clear what kind of position Ling Han held in her Master's heart. He was someone that her Master would practically respect and revere as a Grandmaster Alchemist.

And you idiot actually dare to come into conflict with Ling Han, that was really seeking your own demise.

"It's nothing much, really. Just that Brother Ling and Young Master Luo seem to have some kind of misunderstanding between them. I wanted to help them mediate a bit, but who would have thought that both of them were a bit too quick-tempered, which led to a bit of a misunderstanding," Wei He Le said, playing down the matter.

His cold eyes were fixed on Ling Han, but burning hatred for Ling Han had risen within his heart. However, he had regained his bearings from the earlier shock that he had experienced—he did not believe that Wu Song Lin would invite Ling Han to tea.

Who were you trying to fool?

Who was Wu Song Lin? And who was Ling Han? Even the two of them knowing each other was practically an impossibility, what more drinking tea together.

It must be that Li Si Chan was the one who had been looking for Ling Han, but because she was afraid of letting others know about that, she had pushed all the blame to Wu Song Lin. Why? Because who would dare to confirm this kind of matter with Wu Song Lin? And that's the answer itself.

He was indeed very respectful and reverent towards Li Si Chan, but because he felt as if he had now gotten hold of her "weakness", he naturally felt very bold.

"Brother Wei, you've spoken too lightly, haven't you?" Jin Wu Ji said with a cold laugh, "Just now, you had wanted Ling Han to kneel down to lick Feng Luo's shoes!"

What!" Li Si Chan's face instantly became as cold as ice, and when she looked at Wei He Le, it was as if she was looking at a dead man.

She would definitely have to report this matter to Wu Song Lin, and based on Wu Song Lin's respect towards Ling Han, it was a

huge question whether Wei He Le would even be allowed to remain at the Alchemy Department, what more to become Wu Song Lin's personal disciple.

"Elder Sister Disciple Li, you mustn't just listen to their side of the story!" Wei He Le had already made up his mind to continue his lies, so naturally he would not be making any concessions.

"Ling Han, when are you going to raise your foot?" Feng Luo shouted gloomily, both enraged and embarrassed.

...You guys are really having fun talking, but he was still lying on the ground, and there was still a foot stepping on his face.

Ling Han gave a hump, and added a bit of strength into his foot, causing Feng Luo to suddenly wail in pain. His face was already twisted to an extreme degree. He looked at the spectators, and said with a smile, "Don't worry, I will not be killing him here."

When everyone heard these words, they all felt a hair-raising chill. The implication in Ling Han's words was clear to them—he would still be killing Feng Luo one day.

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